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EXTRAMUSICAL REFERENCES IN THE WORKS OF R. MURRAY SCHAFER

by

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Several authors have mentioned R. Murray Schafer's use of extramusical ideas as a distinguishing characteristic of his music. The thesis examines his use of extramusical ideas throughout his career as a composer.

The concepts of "extramusical" and "extramusical references" are explained with reference to Leonard Meyer's book Emotion and Meaning in Music, and it is stated that the extramusical ideas in Schafer's works are examined through the extramusical references found in his scores. These include: texts, program notes, descriptive titles, dramatic effects, score directions, and visual references. The historical debate concerning the relative merits of including or not including extramusical references in music (absolute vs. non-absolute music) is briefly discussed, and Schafer's views are quoted.

Because the extramusical references reflect Schafer's interests outside of music, and are autobiographical to varying extents, his careers in composition, education, writing, sound research, and visual art are described. Several relationships between specific biographical facts and extramusical references are given, and his interests outside of music are stated as one

reason why he is more inclined than many other composers to use extramusical references in his compositions.

It is shown that the development of Schafer's style between the years 1952 and 1965 exemplifies a logical progression that includes gradual increase in his use of extramusical references, and in the importance of extramusical ideas. Then the relationship of the extramusical references to the two qualities of Schafer's mature works named by Stephen Adams, namely, its capacity for surprise and audience-appeal, are analyzed. It is found that extramusical references, in combination with the musical material, contribute to the achievement of those two characteristics.

The extramusical ideas are then described and the unorthodoxy and diversity of their subject matter is examined. Five groups are distinguished and are analyzed with regards to trends in this century and other composers' use of similar themes. They are described as interesting and thought-provoking, and as an important part of Schafer's compositional process.

The relationship of the various forms of extramusical reference to the musical material is examined in Chapters five and six. The most important forms are found to be texts and program notes. The relation of text and music is analyzed in several works, and the relation of the program note to the music is analyzed in two works: North/White and No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes.

The conclusion reviews the nature and significance of extramusical ideas in Schafer's music and the benefits gained from the study of that aspect of his compositions.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

R. Murray Schafer is one of Canada's outstanding artists. His compositions have been acclaimed in his native Canada and around the world. For ten years he was a professor at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia, leaving there in 1975 for a country homestead in Monteagle Valley, north of Toronto. There he spends most of his time composing, writing, and organizing music projects. He just celebrated his fiftieth birthday in July of this year and is already recognized as one of the most successful Canadian composers of this century.

This study is the first to analyze one characteristic of his compositional style: the use of extramusical ideas, a characteristic of his music that has been briefly mentioned by several authors. The following quotations include the word "extramusical" in general descriptions of his compositions:

> It becomes immediately evident that much of his source material is of extramusical origin. 1

1 Udo Kasemets, "R. Murray Schafer," Contemporary Canadian Composers (ed. by Keith MacMillan and John Beckwith, 1975), p. 200.

> There can be little doubt as to the extraordinary imagination of R. Murray Schafer, and his rare ability to organize musical and extramusical forces. 2

> The impression of Schafer the artist produced by these scores is that his main creative talent lies in his ability to devise strong and evocative frameworks of extra-musical association for his compositions. . . . 3,4

The first quotation describes "source material of extramusical origin"; the second "an ability to organize extramusical forces"; and the third "a framework of extramusical association." All three are describing the music of R. Murray Schafer. In order to explain these observations, this thesis will describe and analyze Schafer's use of extramusical ideas throughout his career as a composer.

The first monograph devoted completely to Schafer and his music was published this year, and includes descriptions and brief analyses of all of his compositions.[5] Monographs with sections on Schafer are: Ian L. Bradley's Twentieth Century Canadian Composers with descriptions of Epitaph for Moonlight, Threnody, and String Quartet No. 1; and George Proctor's Canadian

2 Anonymous critic in the Winnipeg Free Press, Sept. 28, 1975. Quoted by Nancy Gyokeres, "Representatives from 50 Countries Listen to Canadian Music," The Music Scene, No. 287 (Jan.-Feb. 1976), p. 6.

3 David Roberts, Review of three compositions by R. Murray Schafer, Music and Letters, Vol. 62 nos. 3-4 (July 1981), p. 478.

4 The first two quotations refer to all of his works and the last refers to three specific compositions.

5 Stephen Adams, R. Murray Schafer (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983). See Appendix I for list of works and publishers.

Music of the Twentieth Century, which briefly discusses several of Schafer's most important works.[6]

Two theses give descriptions of three of Schafer's works: Robert Skelton's thesis, "Weinzweig, Gould, Schafer: Three Canadian String Quartets," includes a chapter on Schafer's String Quartet No. 1; and Margaret Mills' "Canadian Music: A Listening Program for Intermediate Grades with Teaching Guide" includes a section on Schafer's works Statement in Blue and Threnody.[7,8]

Articles on Schafer contain biographical and descriptive information, transcriptions and reports of interviews, and reviews of performances. There is one article that briefly analyzes one of Schafer's compositions: Bruce Mather's "Notes sur Requiems for the Party Girl";[9] and one other analytical article compares Schafer to Richard Wagner: "Richard Wagner

6 Ian L. Bradley, Twentieth Century Canadian Composers, Vol. 1 (Agincourt, Ontario: GLC Publishers, 1977); and George Proctor, Canadian Music of the Twentieth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

7 Robert Skelton, "Weinzweig, Gould, Schafer: Three Canadian String Quartets" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Indiana, 1976); and Margaret Mills, "Canadian Music: A Listening Program for Intermediate Grades with Teaching Guide" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1971).

8 There is a thesis in progress at the University of Western Ontario on Schafer's soundscape research.

9 Bruce Mather, "Notes sur Requiems for the Party Girl," Canada Music Book, Vol. 1 (Spring-Summer 1970), pp. 9-26.

and R. Murray Schafer: Two Revolutionary and Religious Poets," written by John Rea.[10]

CBC tapes of interviews with the composer were also available, but certainly most of the source material for this thesis was provided by Schafer himself: his writings and his music.

Before discussing extramusical ideas in Schafer's works, it is necessary to understand the meaning of "extramusical." There is no dictionary definition for the term, so an understanding of its meaning must be derived from its usage.

One of the first authors to use the word was Leonard Meyer in his book Emotion and Meaning in Music[11] when he was describing the two groups he called "absolutists" and "referentialists," and their different approaches to the meaning of music. Absolutists were those who derive meanings from within the context of the musical composition itself. Referentialists were those who derive meanings from outside the context of a musical composition: meanings "which in some way refer to the extramusical world of concepts, actions, emotional states, and characters."[12] Thus he described two different contexts. One is the context of the musical materials of the work itself, and the other is the context of the extramusical world. From

10 John Rea, "Richard Wagner and R. Murray Schafer: Two Revolutionary and Religious Poets," Canada Music Book, Vol. 8 (Spring-Summer 1974), pp. 37-51.

11 Leonard B. Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

12 Ibid., p. 1.

this, the following definition of "extramusical" is derived: "extramusical" is an adjective that describes ideas or elements beyond the autonomous musical materials of a composition; ideas or elements that are of the non-musical world.

A composer may include extramusical ideas in his musical compositions by using "extramusical references." Again Meyer is helpful in explaining this concept. He describes "one level" on which music exists independently of extramusical ideas, and implies that the non-musical or extramusical world is referred to in music by the use of "linguistic signs" or other "signs or symbols":

> Not only does music use no linguistic signs but, on one level at least, it operates as a closed system, that is, it employs no signs or symbols referring to the non-musical world. 13

According to this quotation, the basic materials of music do not refer to the non-musical, or extramusical, world. With "linguistic signs," or other "signs or symbols," the "closed system" of music becomes an open system that does refer to non-musical ideas. The linguistic signs or other signs and symbols that refer to extramusical ideas are called "extramusical references" for the purpose of this thesis and it is through these references in Schafer's scores that the extramusical ideas will be examined.

---

13 Ibid., p. vii.

Six forms of extramusical reference were observed in Schafer's scores and will be considered in this thesis:

1) Texts. Over two thirds of his works include this form of reference to the extramusical world. (Example 1.)

2) Program notes. Most of his works without text include an introductory program note that relates the work to an extramusical idea. (Example 2.)

3) Descriptive titles. Most of his mature works have titles which refer to the extramusical world. (Example 3.)

4) Dramatic effects. Schafer has written many works for music theatre, including much extramusical material. He also includes dramatic effects in works not intended as music theatre compositions. (Example 4.)

5) Score directions. These relate a musical effect to an extramusical idea. (Example 5.)

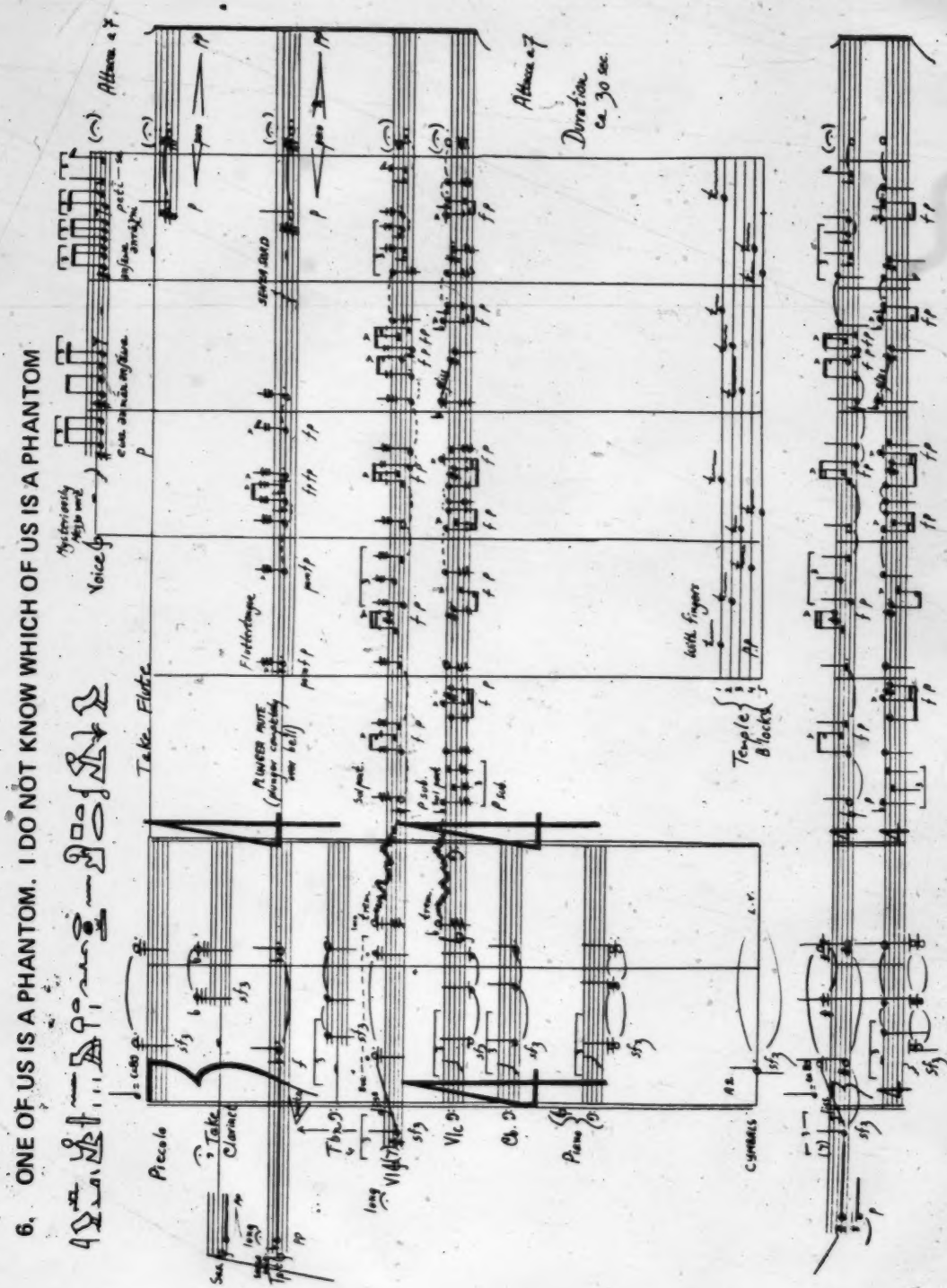
6) Visual references. His scores include artwork which represents extramusical ideas. (Example 6.)

All but the last are linguistic forms of extramusical reference.

The question of whether music should be associated with extramusical ideas and how it should be has been debated for at least a century. Jacques Barzun described the "conflict between the musical purists and the debauchees,"[14] the result of a "recent esthetism" based on "critical enthusiasm for the

14 Jacques Barzun, "The Meaning of Meaning in Music," Chapter 8 in Critical Questions, ed. by Bei Friedland (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 82.

Example 1. Extramusical reference in the form of a text. Arcana. Song no. 6. The text is given in English as the title of the song, above the Egyptian hieroglyphs. The text is sung using the International Phonetic Alphabet to represent the hieroglyphs.



Example 2. Extramusical reference in the form of a program note. Train.

TRAIN

FOR JUNIOR SCHOOL STRING ORCESTRA AND PERCUSSION
WITH OPTIONAL WIND AND/OR BRASS

R. Murray Schafer

PROGRAM NOTE

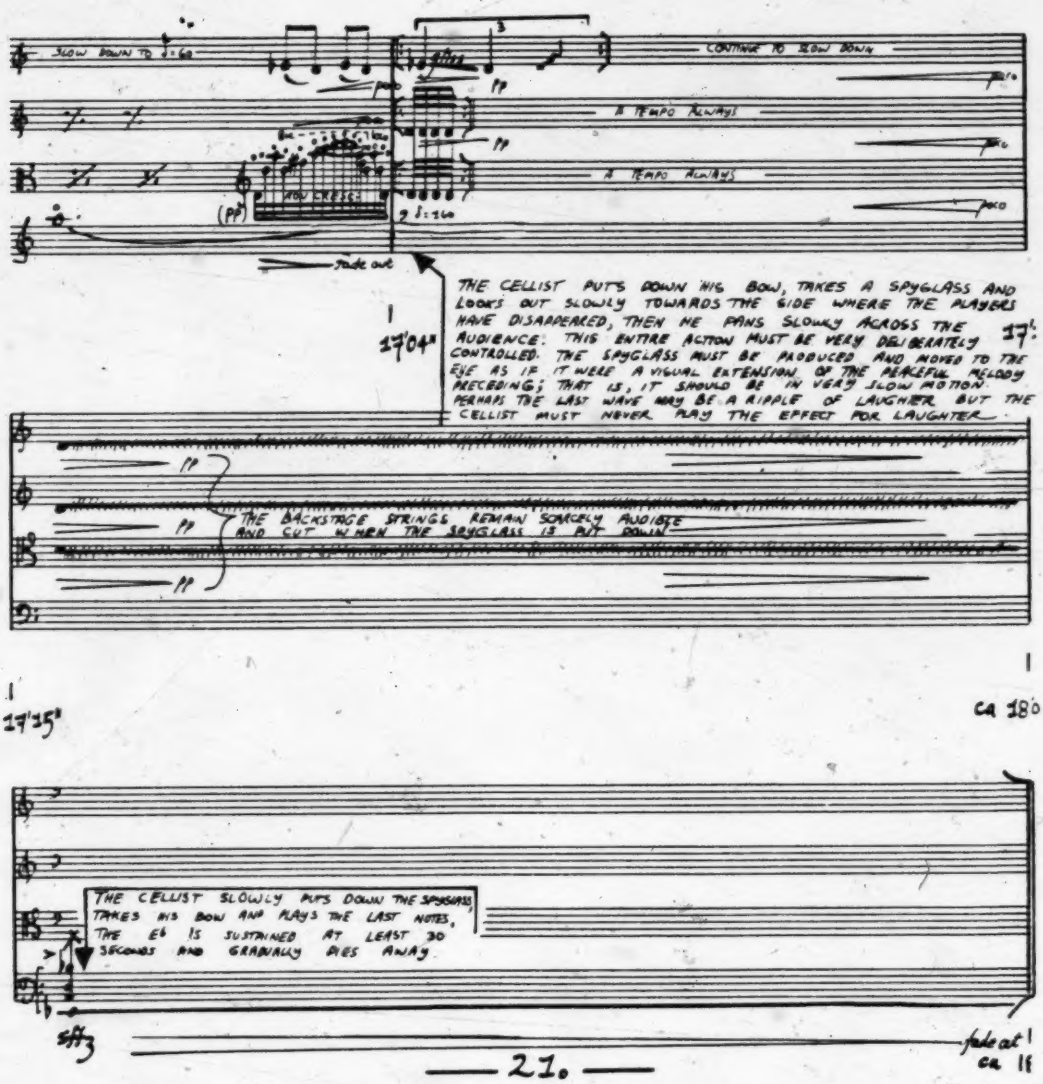
Train was composed at the request of the Contemporary Music Showcase Association, whose principal ambition is to introduce contemporary music into Canadian teaching programs.

I composed the piece during a six-day trip from central Canada to Vancouver and return on the Canadian Pacific Railway during June, 1976. In fact, Train is quite literally a description of that ride, or at least of the eastbound portion of it. Since the CPR prints schedules showing the distance from one stop to the next as well as the altitude of each station, I decided to use this information in the piece. The distance between Vancouver and Montreal (4,633 km.) determines the duration of the piece, with each 1000 km taking up 1 minute (that is, each km = .06 seconds). Within this framework, the percussion punctuate each station stop between Vancouver and Montreal. Stations passed at night are played on bell instruments (like the silver lights of unknown towns, viewed from the berth window) and those passed during the day are played on drums and wood instruments. Generally the size of the city corresponds to the loudness of the percussion; but in other ways also, the composer has sought to give a subjective impression of the experiences from his train window: thus, ugly cities get dissonant chords, etc. All these effects for percussion are given in the form of graphic signals that resemble railway signals.

The string instruments give an approximate idea of the terrain of the country through which the train passes, and the pitches they play were suggested by the CPR altitude chart. The effect can be heard right at the beginning as the train leaves Vancouver (altitude 18 ft = low E of the double basses) and slowly climbs through the Rocky Mountains to Field (altitude 5,000 ft = highest possible note on violins).

Example 3. Extramusical reference in the form of a descriptive title. In Search of Zoroaster.

Example 4. Extramusical reference in the form of a dramatic effect. String Quartet No. 2 (Waves), p. 21. The cellist is instructed to perform actions with a spyglass.

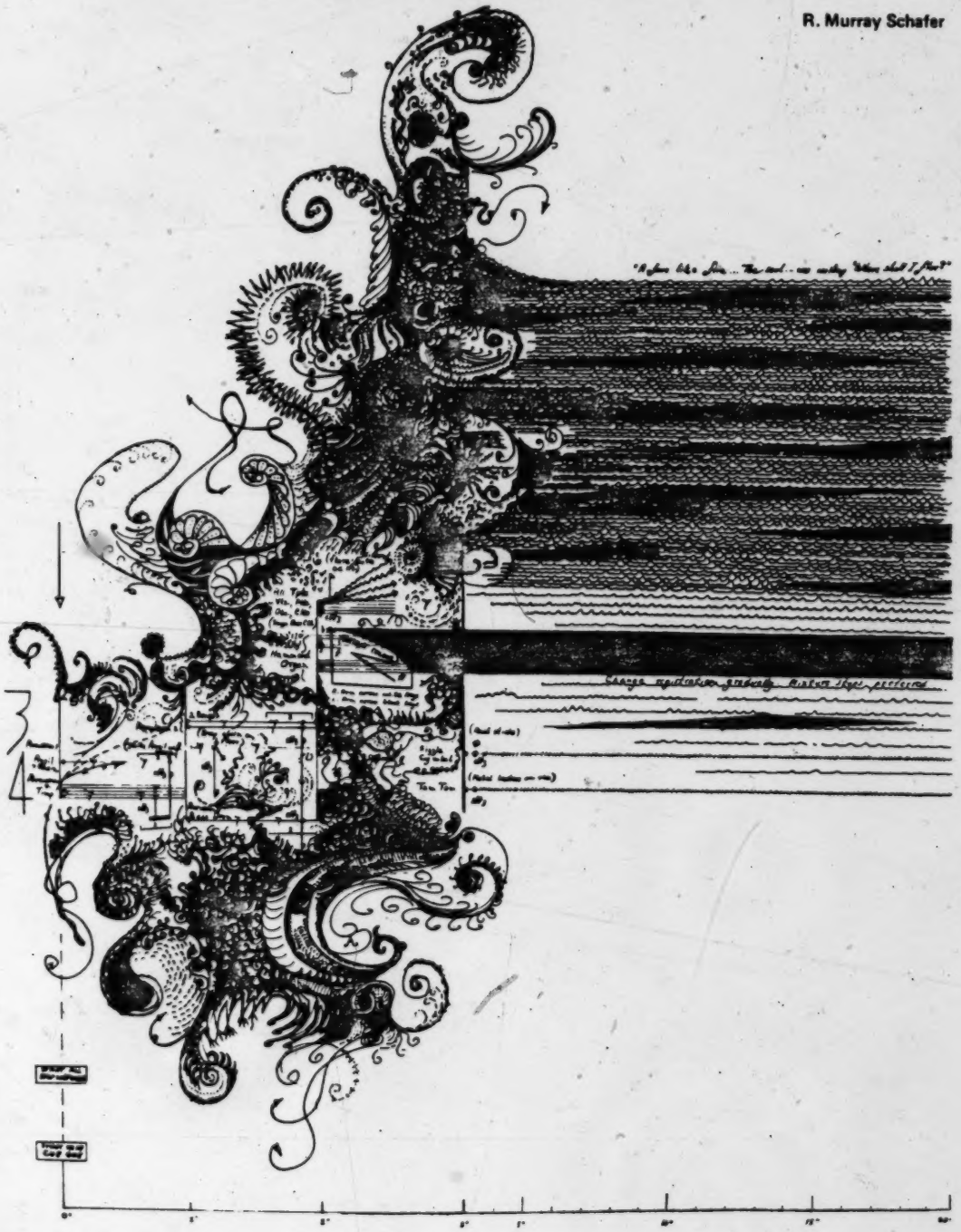

SLOW DOWN TO ♩=60
CONTINUE TO SLOW DOWN
A TEMPO ALWAYS
A TEMPO ALWAYS
(pp)
fade out
17'04"
THE CELLIST PUTS DOWN HIS BOW, TAKES A SPYGLASS AND LOOKS OUT SLOWLY TOWARDS THE SIDE WHERE THE PLAYERS HAVE DISAPPEARED, THEN HE PANS SLOWLY ACROSS THE AUDIENCE. THIS ENTIRE ACTION MUST BE VERY DELIBERATELY CONTROLLED. THE SPYGLASS MUST BE PRODUCED AND MOVED TO THE EYE AS IF IT WERE A VISUAL EXTENSION OF THE PEACEFUL MELODY PRECEDING; THAT IS, IT SHOULD BE IN VERY SLOW MOTION. PERHAPS THE LAST WAVE MAY BE A RIPPLE OF LAUGHTER BUT THE CELLIST MUST NEVER PLAY THE EFFECT FOR LAUGHTER.
17'
THE BACKSTAGE STRINGS REMAIN SOMEWHAT AUDIBLE AND CUT WHEN THE SPYGLASS IS PUT DOWN.
17'35"
ca 18'
THE CELLIST SLOWLY PUTS DOWN THE SPYGLASS, TAKES HIS BOW AND PLAYS THE LAST NOTES. THE E♭ IS SUSTAINED AT LEAST 30 SECONDS AND GRADUALLY DIES AWAY.
sff
fade at
ca 19'

Example 5. Extramusical reference in the form of a score direction. Divan I Shams I Tabriz, 0"-20", p. 1. The words "A face like fire . . . The soul . . . was wailing 'Where shall I flee?' " are added to the score to inspire a certain musical effect and interpretation.

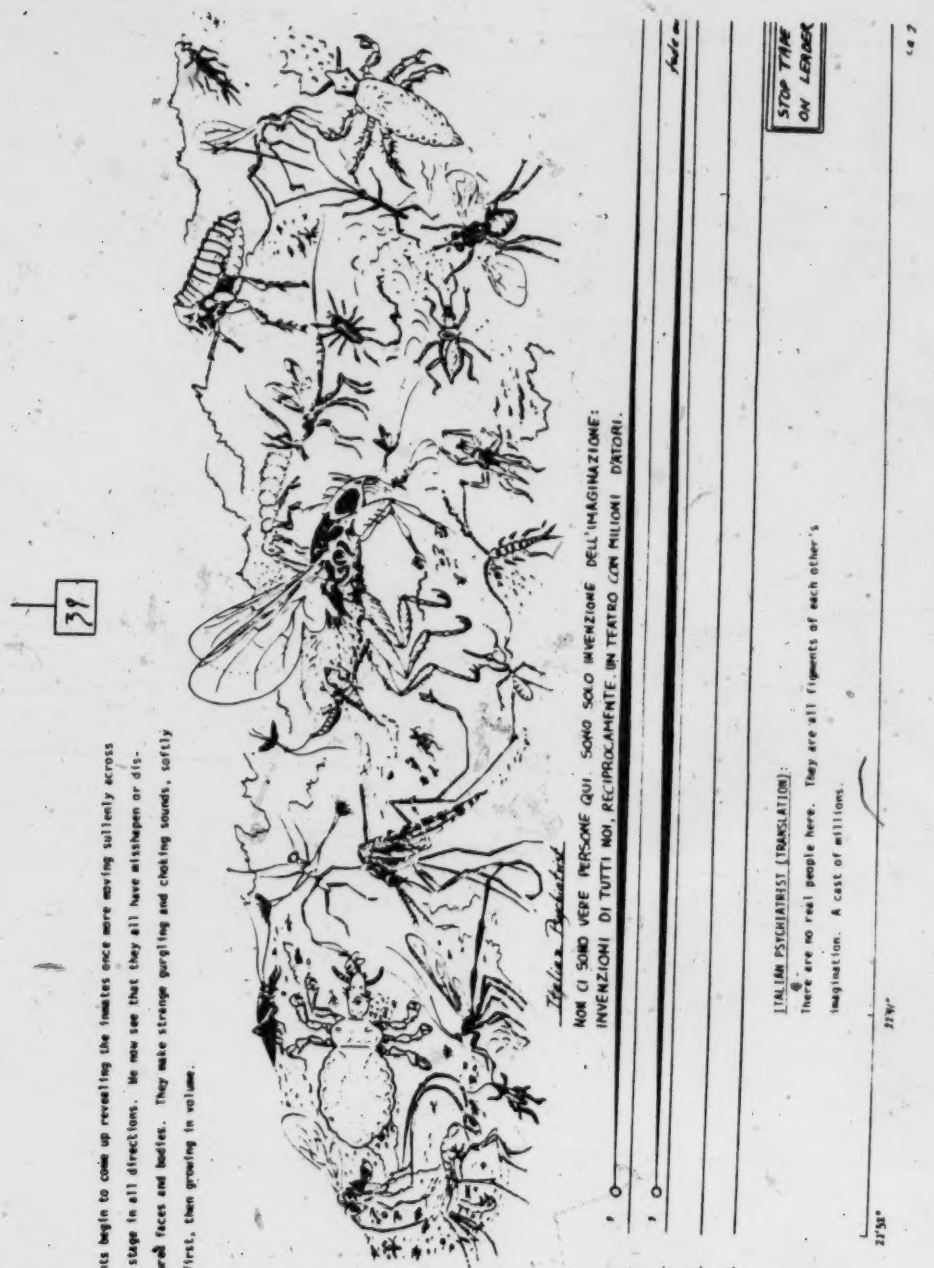
Sem's for the Movlana Jalal al-Din Rumi

Divan I Shams I Tabriz

R. Murray Schafer



Example 6. Extramusical reference in the form of visual artwork. Patria II, p. 39.


39
Lights begin to come up revealing the inmates once more moving sullenly across the stage in all directions. We now see that they all have misshapen or disfigured faces and bodies. They make strange gurgling and choking sounds, softly at first, then growing in volume.
Italian Psychiatrist
NON CI SONO VERE PERSONE QUI. SONO SOLO INVENZIONE DELL'IMAGINAZIONE: INVENZIONI DI TUTTI NOI, RECIPROCAMENTE. UN TEATRO CON MILIONI DATORI.
ITALIAN PSYCHIATRIST (TRANSLATION):
There are no real people here. They are all figments of each other's imagination. A cast of millions.
STOP TAPE ON LEADER

pure and absolute":

> It is only within the last two centuries that solely instrumental music has assumed preeminence and so has come to represent the art as a whole and to serve as the theoretical model for all music. Within instrumental music itself, the critical enthusiasm for the pure and absolute is the product of a very recent estheticism. It belongs mainly to the second half of the nineteenth century 15

Barzun argued that it was the enthusiasm for absolute music that caused the opposition to the use of extramusical references. If the "absolute" aesthetic belongs mainly to the second half of the nineteenth century," as Meyer states, it is ironic that extramusical references were often included in musical scores at that time. The contradiction is exemplified by the composer Franz Liszt, whose works often included extramusical references in the form of descriptive titles and programs,[16] but who opposed their use in his writings on music. In the following passage he described why programs should not be used:

> . . . because in such case the words tend to destroy the magic, to desecrate the feelings, and to break the most delicate fabrics of the sound which had taken this form just because they were incapable of formulation in words, images or ideas. 17

---

15 Ibid., pp. 80-81.

16 Humphrey Searle wrote the following regarding Liszt's use of programs: "The prefixes affixed to the symphonic poems are misleading: most of them were written by the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein or by Bülow; though intended to give the audience some idea of the thoughts behind the music, they often do not really correspond to Liszt's actual compositions. To him musical construction was more important than scene-painting." See "Franz Liszt," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 11, p. 42.

17 Franz Liszt, "Berlioz und seine Harold-Symphonie," Gesammelte Schriften. Quoted in Suzanne Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (Cambridge Massachusettes: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 236.

The discussion of the merits of absolute versus non-absolute music has continued in the twentieth century. Nicholas Temperley noted that conflicting opinions still surrounded the issue in 1971:

> . . . there is the lingering notion that abstract music is somehow purer and nobler than music linked to words or action. In the middle-class hierarchy of musical values, the string quartet is at the top; other music becomes more vulgar as it departs further from that 'perfect form.' 18

Opposing viewpoints have been expressed by two well-respected philosophers of this century. Suzanne Langer, a philosopher on symbolism in music, claimed the use of a program was a "crutch," "crude," and "a denial of the true nature of music":

> A program is simply a crutch. It is a resort to the crude but familiar method of holding feelings in the imagination by envisaging their attendant circumstance. It does not mean that the listener is unmusical, but merely that he is not musical enough to think entirely in musical terms. It is really a denial of the true nature of music, which is unconventionalized, unverbalized freedom of thought. That is why the opponents of program music and of hermeneutic are so vehement in their protests; they feel the complete misconception of the artistic significance of tonal structures, and although they give doubtful reasons for their objection, their reaction is perfectly sound. 19

Leonard Meyer, contrarily, described music that included extramusical references as equal to absolute music: not better nor worse, merely different.[20] He did not denounce the use of extramusical references as did Langer.

---

18 Nicholas Temperley, "The Symphonie Fantastique and its Program," Musical Quarterly, Vol. 57 no. 4 (Spring 1971), p. 594.

19 Suzanne Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (Cambridge Massachusettes: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 242-243.

20 Leonard Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music, chapter one.

Today, it appears that the issue is unresolved, perhaps with a trend toward the acceptance of extramusical associations and a trend away from enthusiasm for the absolute in music.[21] When Schafer was asked if the question of extramusical association was "overblown" by music scholars, he responded:

> Yes. It's a fashion. There will come a time when this debate will seem old fashioned. There will come a time when music as we currently understand and study it, won't exist. The word "music," according to an ethnomusicologist friend of mine, doesn't exist in Tir Yoruba, Igbo, Ekik, Birom, Hausa, Jarawa, Idoma, Eggon and a dozen other languages from the Nigeria-Camaroon area; and this is true of many other parts of the world as well. That is, music is always associated with something outside itself and if it isn't, it is meaningless. 22

If "music is always associated with something outside itself," as Schafer states, there are composers who give clues as to the nature of that "something," and there are composers who do not give clues. The clues are the extramusical references, and Schafer is one of many contemporary composers who has not hesitated to include references to the extramusical world in his compositions. Almost all of his compositions include some form of extramusical reference.[23]

---

21 See Jacques Barzun's article, "The Meaning of Meaning in Music," which describes a change in attitude toward acceptance of extramusical interpretations; and also see Peter Kivy's The Corded Shell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), a study on how music expresses extramusical ideas.

22 R. Murray Schafer, correspondence with the author, Sept. 4, 1983.

23 Only six of Schafer's early works do not have extramusical references. They are: Polytonality (1952), Concerto for Harpsichord and Eight Wind Instruments (1954), Sonatina for Flute and Harpsichord (1958), Partita for String Orchestra (1961), Untitled Composition for Orchestra No. 1 (1963), and Untitled Composition for Orchestra No. 2 (1963). Works that have been withdrawn by the composer have not been considered.

Thus it is surprising that Schafer's writings, like those of Franz Liszt, suggest a preference for the absolute in music. He wrote:

> The one thing about music that makes it different and special is that it is an abstract art form. Others are descriptive. 24

> . . . art is most seductive precisely when it is most abstract and vague. 25

> The unique feature of music is its abstractness which theoretically renders it amoral. Since its language describes neither events nor ideas, it betrays no loyalty to 'causes.' 26

Since he includes extramusical references in his scores at the same time that he espouses absolute music in his writings, Schafer must accept both viewpoints as did Meyer in Emotion and Meaning in Music.[27] Jacques Barzun described this tendency toward the acceptance of both viewpoints as "an interesting paradox," whereby one accepts both the absolute nature of music and its relation to the extramusical world, realizing its expression as the "essence of experience," related to this world, but of another:

> By an interesting paradox, as soon as one is persuaded that this essence of experience cannot be brought out in literal language, one is freed to talk about music in similes and comparisons, for one knows that these do not refer to the experience but merely orient the reader or listener toward a quarter of human life where one thinks that essence may be found. 28

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24 Tape No. 1240A, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

25 R. Murray Schafer, "Two Musicians in Fiction," Canadian Music Journal, Vol. 4 no. 3 (Spring 1960), p. 28.

26 R. Murray Schafer, "Music and the Iron Curtain," Queen's Quarterly, Vol. 67 (Autumn 1960), p. 407.

27 See p. 8.

28 Jacques Barzun, "The Meaning of Meaning in Music," p. 94.

If Schafer accepts both viewpoints, he does so intuitively, without conscious effort. He responded that he had "no opinion" when asked about his views on the debate between the relative merits of absolute and program music. The question is not relevant to Schafer, and has little relevance to this thesis, because the extramusical references in his scores have been put there intuitively and artistically, and all that is required for this thesis is that they are consistently used in the music of a successful composer.

CHAPTER 2

Biography: Composition and Other Careers

Before the extramusical references in Schafer's music are examined, it will be helpful to describe some aspects of his life. The extramusical references are related to his biography in two ways: 1) They often relate to one of his interests outside of composition. 2) They are often autobiographical, reflecting an experience, a personality trait, or an attitude of the composer.

The extramusical references indicate that he is a man with many interests and talents in addition to composition, and his biography reveals this to be true. He is not only well-known as a composer, but also as an educator, as a writer, and as a sound researcher.

Since his late twenties, Schafer's first concern has been composition. Its importance in comparison to his other involvements is described by Peter Such:

> Murray Schafer regards himself as a composer first. If any contribution of his will have a lasting life he expects and hopes it will be his compositions. The other things he is involved in, and there are a great many, he sees as ephemeral, ... Composing is at the generating centre of his life and commands all his talents and energies. 29

It is surprising that Schafer has had little formal study, in either composition or any other field. He received his L.R.S.M.[30] in piano performance at the age of nineteen, and soon afterward enrolled in the music program at the University of Toronto. Piano performance was to be his main area of interest, but his piano professor, Alberto Guerrero, soon recognized that he was not suited to a performance career and lessons were usually spent discussing topics that he had been studying on his own. Greta Kraus instructed him on the harpsichord, which he enjoyed, and he also had informal study sessions with Marshall McLuhan, a philosopher who was an important influence on the young Schafer.

He studied composition at the university with John Weinzweig, a well-respected Canadian composer. Weinzweig was a teacher who allowed each student to develop his own style, and apparently did not have much influence on the younger composer's compositional style.

Schafer soon developed a dislike for the university system

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29 Peter Such, "R. Murray Schafer," Soundprints (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Co. Ltd., 1972), pp. 159-160.

30 L.R.S.M. is the common abbreviation for Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music, London, England.

of education, finding it confining and conservative, and was eventually asked by the administration either to leave or to apologize to several professors whom he had insulted. (He has never been a conformist of any sort). He described his feelings at that time:

> Fact is, I may have been some sort of fringe character but I felt I was being discriminated against in favour of an educational system that was angled straight down the centre. 31

He left the University of Toronto and went to work on a ship in the Great Lakes, saving his money for travel.

In 1956 he went to Europe, staying for two years in and around Vienna. When he returned for a brief visit to Canada in 1958, he received a Canada Council Grant to study with his second and only other composition teacher, Peter Racine Fricker, in England. He met with Fricker on an informal and infrequent basis,[32] with the result that Fricker, like Weinzweig, seems not to have had a significant influence on the young composer. There was much new music being performed in England at that time, and while there, Schafer was exposed to works of Schoenberg, Webern, Dallapiccola, and contemporary British composers. He learned a great deal about international trends and worked arduously on his composition skills. When he returned to Canada in 1961, he was prepared to begin his career as a composer.

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31 Quoted in Peter Such, "R. Murray Schafer," Soundprints, p. 183.

32 According to Peter Such, Schafer had a very casual relationship with Fricker: ". . . he and Fricker had come to an arrangement that, instead of going through all the formal arabesques the Canada Council required, they would meet each other every Sunday morning and sit in the pub for a beer and a chat. They did this for a year." (Soundprints, p. 143).

Much progress had been made in Canada in the late 1950s toward the growth and development of its native culture, including music. The first journal devoted to Canadian music was begun in 1955: the Canadian Music Journal. In 1957 the Canada Council was established, a government agency for the promotion of Canadian culture. An electronic studio was set up at the University of Toronto in 1958, and the next year the Canadian Music Centre was founded, providing central organization of and for Canadian composers and their music.

Schafer's first composition to be mentioned in a review was his work Three Contemporaries, a three-movement satirical song cycle begun while he was a student at the University of Toronto and finished in Vienna. The review appeared in the Canadian Music Journal in 1958, following a Toronto concert that featured the works of young Toronto composers. The critic described Schafer's work as outstanding, not only in the concert, but in all of Canada:

> Three Contemporaries was the success of the concert, and is as original a work as this commentator has heard from the pen of a Canadian lately. 33

Schafer was twenty-five years old and was still travelling in Europe.

Nine years later, the news that he was a "composer to watch" crossed the Canadian border to the United States:

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33 John Beckwith, "Young Composers' Performances in Toronto," Canadian Music Journal, Vol. 2 no. 4 (Summer 1958), p. 55.

> Now, in 1967, Schafer has emerged as one of the most significant figures on the Canadian music scene. He is most definitely a composer to watch, as he demonstrated quite conclusively at the Summer 1967 Tanglewood Festival of American Music. With his Gita, . . . Schafer ran away from the field. 34

He had returned to Canada, and after two years as resident musician at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, he had accepted a teaching position at Simon Fraser University in the Department of Communications, where he remained for ten years (1965-1975).

During the 1970s, his reputation became international in scope. The critics agreed:

> Schafer may be considered one of Canada's most successful composers, one of a few with an international reputation. 35

> Schafer's reputation has continued to grow. Today he is not only accepted as one of Canada's foremost composers, but is recognized as one of the most exciting figures in the international avantgarde. 36

> Of all the composers living in Canada today, none has experienced such a meteoric rise to fame as has Murray Schafer. He was relatively unknown even a decade ago, but today he is without question one of Canada's most successful composers. His fame and reputation are world-wide 37

He has received many honours and awards throughout his composing career. In 1966 he was commissioned to write the first

34 Irving Lowens, Washington Star, quoted in pamphlet "R. Murray Schafer," Performing Rights Organization of Canada Limited, 1979.

35 Udo Kasemets, "R. Murray Schafer," Contemporary Canadian Composers, pp. 199-200.

36 Anonymous author, "R. Murray Schafer," pamphlet from Performing Rights Organization of Canada Ltd., 1979.

37 Ian L. Bradley, "R. Murray Schafer," Twentieth Century Canadian Composers, p. 189.

Canadian television-opera for CBC, giving him "unprecedented exposure for a young composer."[38] He commented: "This was a very adventurous proposal for not only was I a quite unknown composer, but the work was in the 'fatal' language of English."[39] The work was entitled Loving and was premiered on the CBC television series "Festival" in May of 1966.

In 1967, Canada's Centennial year, Schafer was commissioned by the Tanglewood Music Festival in the United States to write the work Gita. He also acted as the music consultant at Expo '67, the World's Fair held in Montreal, composing the music for the "Kaleidoscope" and "Man and Life" pavilions.

The next year he received his first international award from the Fromm Foundation in the United States for his work Requiems for the Party Girl. He also received his first major commission from a large Canadian orchestra. For the Montreal Symphony he wrote Son of Heldenleben.

His first major Canadian award was the Canadian Music Council's Annual Medal which he received in 1972. In 1974 he won a Guggenheim Fellowship and the first Harold Moon prize given by the Performing Rights Organization of Canada for distinguished contributions to music at an international level.

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38 Anonymous author, "R. Murray Schafer," pamphlet from Performing Rights Organization of Canada Ltd., 1979.

39 R. Murray Schafer, "Notes for the Stagework Loving," Canada Music Book, Vol. 8 (Spring-Summer 1974), pp. 25-26.

Schafer was the first recipient of the Canadian Music Council's Composer of the Year award in 1977, and was the first to be awarded the Jules Léger prize for New Chamber Music in Canada the next year for String Quartet No. 2 (Waves).

In 1980, he won the Prix International Arthur-Honegger, a prestigious international competition previously won by such well-known composers as Luigi Dallapiccola and Krzysztof Penderecki. The same year, his composition Hymn to Night was placed second out of ninety compositions in the International Rostrum of Composers Festival.

In recognition of his many achievements, he was awarded an honourary doctorate from Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, in 1981.

His career as a composer was aptly described as a "meteoric rise to fame." To date he has written over sixty published compositions and continues to write an average of three or four major works each year.

He is also known internationally in the field of music education. His contribution to this field was acknowledged by George Proctor: "The most original contribution that Canada has made to music education has been through the work of R. Murray Schafer."[40] His teaching methods have been used in school music

40 George Proctor, "Education in Music," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 6, p. 35.

programs in Canada, the U.S.A., England and Germany, and his five booklets on music education have been translated into French, German, Hungarian, and Japanese. He has also lectured on the topic across Canada and the U.S.A., in England, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and Austria. A documentary film entitled Bing Bang Boom on Schafer and his teaching methods was awarded first prize in the educational film competition in New York in 1970.

He became involved in teaching music at a time when the education system was under criticism. After the launching of Sputnik I by the U.S.S.R. in 1957, the U.S. (and shortly after Canada) was prompted to reevaluate its education system. Michael Mark noted the result for music education: "It gradually became obvious that music educators could not continue to offer a 1930s curriculum in a time of fast and radical change."[41] Schafer had been critical of the formal education he had received as a student, so when given the opportunity to teach, he was determined to offer something quite different and better than had been offered him.

His first experience with classroom teaching was in St. John's, Newfoundland, during his tenure as musician-in-residence at Memorial University (1963-65). In the summer of 1964 he was invited to teach music appreciation at the North York Summer Music School in Ontario where his unorthodox teaching methods were first

41 Michael Mark, Contemporary Music Education (New York: Schirmer Books, 1978), p. 17.

noticed by Canadian educators.. He was invited to participate in the "Composer in the Classroom" experimental project modelled after the U.S. project of 1959 called "The Young Composers Project" as one of fourteen composers chosen to work with students aged thirteen to nineteen in school classrooms, and to write music for their use. This experience led to the publication of his first booklet on music education called Composer in the Classroom, published in 1965.

As a teacher at Simon Fraser University (1965-1975) he continued to develop his educational theories. The result was four additional booklets on various aspects of his teaching experiments: Ear Cleaning (1967), The New Soundscape (1969), When Words Sing (1970), and The Rhinoceros in the Classroom (1975). These smaller publications were collected in a full-length monograph entitled Creative Music Education in 1977.

He is a natural teacher and innovator. He has a compelling desire to communicate and to provoke thought, and is especially inclined to challenge the status quo. Keith Bissell described Schafer's techniques and ability as an educator:

> . . . a gifted teacher with a flair for communicating with young people. His technique in the classroom . . . is refreshingly unorthodox. It is flexible, socratic, and deceptively improvisatory. His writing on music education is cogent, and constantly sparkles with the composer's insight into the creative process; at the same time, his extensive practical experience in the classroom enables him to speak with authority. 42

42 Keith Bissell, Introduction to Ear Cleaning by R. Murray Schafer (Toronto: BMI Canada Ltd., 1967).

His original approach to music education is based on three ideas which he believes to be most important: creativity, sound awareness, and synthesis of the arts. There are many similarities with the theories of John Cage. Alan Gillmor stated that Schafer's educational writings were "among the first attempts to introduce Cageian concepts of creative hearing and sensory awareness into the Canadian classroom."[43] His method stresses active student participation through free discussion, experimentation, and improvisation. And the teacher is always a learner, according to Schafer:

> I believe every teacher is primarily in the business of educating himself or herself, and that if this activity is interesting it will prove contagious for those around. I believe that any design for education which leaves the teacher growthless is false. I believe the teacher is primarily a student, and the moment he ceases to be one the philosophy of education is in trouble. 44

He has written several works for educational purposes, including Statement in Blue (1964), Threnody (1967), Epitaph for Moonlight (1968), and Minimusic (1969), early works that were important in establishing his reputation. They represent some of his most successful and most frequently performed compositions. His more recent works for young performers include Miniwanka (1971) and Train (1976).

43 Alan Gillmor, "R. Murray Schafer," Encyclopedia of Music in Canada, p. 850.

44 R. Murray Schafer, The Rhinoceros in the Classroom (Toronto: Universal Edition, 1975), p. 1.

Schafer is continuing to accept temporary teaching positions with various institutions and also enjoys teaching assignments that involve performances of his own works. He helped with the preparation of Apocalypsis, premiered in Toronto in 1980, and also with Ra, premiered in Toronto in 1982. He now instructs the church choir in the village of Meynooth, Ontario, and has written several works for their use: Jonah (1979), Hear Me Out (1979), and Gamelan (1979).

He is also an accomplished writer, though his reputation in this field is not as widespread as in the fields of composition and education. He has written in a variety of forms and on diverse topics. In addition to his five education booklets he has written four monographs, many articles, poetry, and a novel (of sorts).

He was always an avid reader. His younger brother Paul described him as born a student and scholar.[45] Indeed, he is well-read and for the most part is self-taught. On his own he has studied medieval German, Arabic, Latin, French, Italian, a great body of philosophy and literature, and religion, among other things.

Srul Irving Glick described Schafer's apartment when he was a student.[46] Apparently on one occasion Schafer had strung a clothesline across his small room on which were hung pieces of

45 Tape 1240A, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

46 Ibid.

paper with various quotes written them. They were excerpts from whatever Schafer was studying at the time (Schopenauer, for example), organized so that he could study and remember them. All this reading and studying provided him with a good background for a career in writing.

He began writing professionally after he left the University of Toronto while in Europe. He supported himself while there by writing journal articles and by preparing programs for the BBC in England. One of his projects was a series of interviews with sixteen British composers, which he later transcribed and edited. He published the interviews as his first book, entitled British Composers in Interview (1963). It inspired a favourable review from J.A. Westrup in Music and Letters.[47]

Articles by Schafer appeared regularly in Canadian journals beginning in 1959. He often expressed a somewhat radical, anti-establishment viewpoint, for example in his article "Opera and Reform," where he criticized opera, and admitted to cynicism:

> . . . and speaking of heavy charm, how many of us in North America have received our introduction to opera via the Saturday afternoon "Met" broadcasts, where, during the intermission, ladies and gentlemen with European accents elucidate impossible plots to the accompaniment of bombarding pianos? . . . I am cynical perhaps, but I take it to mean that year by year more and more Canadians are becoming duped into believing that the appreciation of opera is a mark of good breeding and superiority of class. 48

47 J.A. Westrup, "Editorial," Music and Letters, Vol. 44 (Oct. 1963), pp. 319-24.

48 R. Murray Schafer, "Opera and Reform," Opera Canada, Vol. 5 (1964), pp. 10-11.

In later years, his tone mellowed.

When he was in Europe he began research on two subjects which led eventually to the publication of two monographs: E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music (1975), and Ezra Pound and Music (1977).

The original draft for the first book was written between 1960 and 1963, more than ten years before it was finally published. E.T.A. Hoffmann, the subject of the book, was a German conductor, composer, jurist, and writer, remembered today primarily as a music critic of the early romantic period. In his book, Schafer combined nine translations of Hoffmann's essays on music with chapters of analytical commentary. Generally the critics found the book more provocative and inventive than scholarly in the traditional musicological sense because of Schafer's subjectivity: his admiration and fascination for this period in music history is clear in the text. The book is above all Schafer's interpretation of the sociological and aesthetic implications of Hoffmann's writings. One critic suggested that Schafer was much like E.T.A. Hoffmann,[49] and others, too, have described him as a twentieth-century romantic.

His interest in Ezra Pound, the subject of his most recent book, began during his student days at the University of Toronto, where he was introduced to Pound's poetry by Professor Marshall McLuhan. Pound, an American, is best-known as a poet, and was

49 Gordon L. Tracey, "Review of E.T.A. Hoffmann and Music," University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. 45 no. 4 (Summer 1975), pp. 403-404.

also an amateur composer. He wrote an unorthodox Treatise on Harmony, a body of music criticism, and two operas. He also reviewed concerts for a London newspaper, The New Age, between 1917 and 1920. Schafer's attraction to Pound's work may be due to their common interests in the relation of music and poetry, and in the revival of older music. When Schafer was in London he began corresponding with Pound, who had recently been released from an American mental hospital and was living in a small castle in the Tyrolean alps. Schafer visited him in 1960, returning with the last volume of Pound's Cantos to deliver to T.S. Eliot in London, and Pound's opera Le Testament de François Villon (1920-21), which Schafer edited for broadcast on the BBC.

His article entitled "Ezra Pound and Music" was published in 1961, and sixteen years later the book of the same name was published with the original article serving as an introduction to the collection of Pound's writings on music. The book was welcomed and acclaimed by both music and literary critics. Stephen Adams wrote:

> Murray Schafer has performed the service of disentangling all of Pound's musical writings from the welter of his other interests, and this volume benefits from the editor's nearly twenty years of familiarity with this material. . . . Music was a central interest to Pound, not a minor enthusiasm, as it has usually been regarded. Ezra Pound and Music probably represents the most important single body of Pound's previously uncollected prose. 50

50 Stephen Adams, "Review of Ezra Pound and Music," Paideuma, Vol. 7 (Spring 1978), p. 327.

The book contains articles of criticism by Pound arranged in chronological order with introduction, index, and explanatory footnotes by Schafer. A second proposed volume will relate Pound's writings on music to his compositions.

Schafer has also written a novel, but not an ordinary novel. It has been described as a "poem-novel," and as a "visual novel." Even Schafer himself finds it difficult to describe:

> Last year I wrote a funny kind of graphic novel that isn't creative literature. It isn't visual art, so I don't know exactly what it is: something in midstream perhaps between different art forms. 51

It combines graphics with words to depict a brief, poetic, love story. Entitled Smoke, it has similarities to Turgenev's novel of the same name.[52] They are both love stories with social commentary.

He has also published poetry. Music in the Cold is a poetic description of the arts in Canada: past, present, and future. Chaldean Inscription is a creative experiment using calligraphic and hieroglyphic ideas. His fictional piece called "Dicamus et Labyrinthos" is a carefully contrived literary work about a philologist's quest to decipher an ancient hieroglyph.

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51 Tape 1240A, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

52 Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev, Smoke: A Novel (London: W. Heinemann, 1920). Turgenev (1818-1883) was a Russian novelist.

Some have suggested that Schafer will be remembered above all for his work on sound research, another field in which he has achieved an international reputation.

The study of the sound environment and the fight against noise pollution are relatively new concerns. The International Association Against Noise was formed in 1959. The first Noise Abatement Society appeared in Britain in 1962, followed by one in Argentina in 1964. UNESCO began a research project on the sound environment in 1967 that eventually became known as the "World Soundscape Project." It was as the director of this project that Schafer became involved with sound research at an international level.

His interest in the subject began when he moved from the small city of St. John's to the large city of Vancouver, in 1965. He was bothered by the sounds of the city: their magnitude, their abundance, their ubiquity, their unavoidability and their cacophonous quality. It annoyed Schafer to the point where he surveyed noise by-laws, mounting a campaign to inform people that the soundscape was a threat, was getting worse, and could and should be regulated and improved. He obtained 5,000 signatures on a petition to stop a noisy hovercraft from daily cruising the city's boundary.

The first sign of Schafer's concern for the sound environment to appear in his writings is in Ear Cleaning, the second of his educational booklets, written in 1967. There he stated his main purpose was to teach awareness of the soundscape:

> I felt my primary task in this course was to open ears. I have tried always to induce students to notice sounds they have never really listened to before, listen like mad to the sounds of their own environment and the sounds they themselves inject into their environment. 53

The tone of the phrase "listen like mad" suggests the enthusiasm with which Schafer pursued his project. He offered the first course on noise pollution at Simon Fraser University in 1968, and the next year set up a soundscape project, inviting other university professors to work with him on the study of the sound environment. With this project, Simon Fraser became a centre for soundscape research. His next educational booklet, entitled The New Soundscape, described his experimental classes that focussed on sound research.

In 1970 he extended his soundscape research beyond its didactic purpose, and published The Book of Noise which presented the results of his work to that date in a more scientific manner. He addressed the world population, describing the soundscape as a world-wide concern.

The next year he received a $39,000 grant from the Canadian Donner Foundation, and a grant from UNESCO to continue his work, now called "The World Soundscape Project," officially begun in 1971 under the auspices of UNESCO. A collegue claimed that Schafer was the first person to recognize this field as a legitimate field of study and to introduce it into the university curriculum. 54

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53 R. Murray Schafer, Ear Cleaning, p. 1.

54 Tape 1240A, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

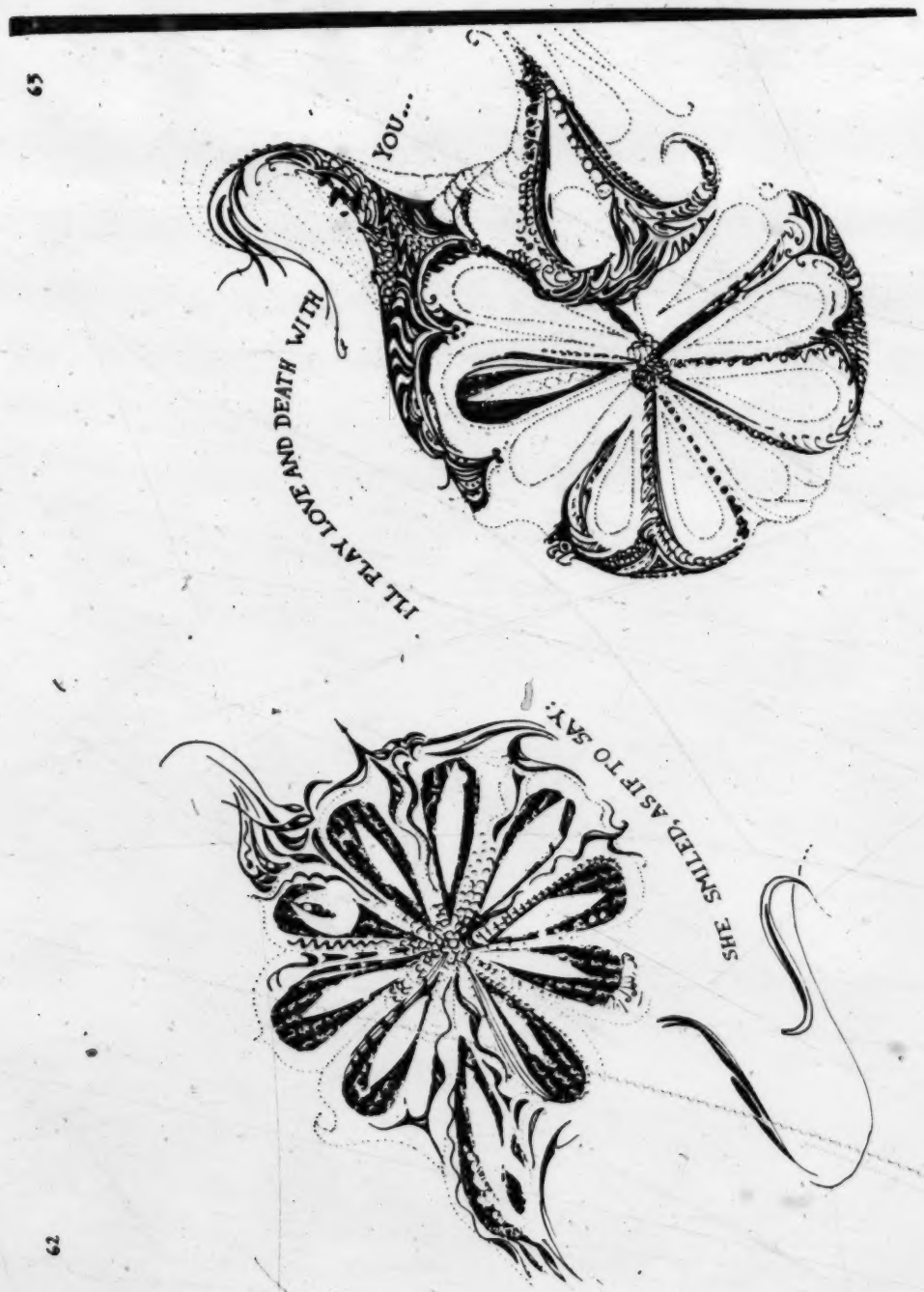
He has published many articles relating to the soundscape, and has lectured around the world on the topic. The definitive publication on his sound research is his book entitled The Tuning of the World, published in 1977: a compilation and revision of previously published articles and booklets.

He still continues to work on the World Soundscape Project, now with many musicians and scientists around the world. In his barn he has set up a "sound sculpture" of old farm tools and scraps arranged in a domino-like sequence. The sound sculpture is "played" when two people teeter on a seesaw. This begins the sequence of movements from which the sounds are produced. It was shown in the final section of Yehudi Menuhin's television series in the history of music, a CBC production entitled Music and Man.[55] His sound sculptures are an artistic expression resulting from his soundscape research.

He is also a visual artist and has drawn and painted throughout his life. Influenced by his father who was an amateur painter, Schafer decided in high school to pursue a career in that field, but because he was offered a scholarship, he entered the music program at the University of Toronto. He has illustrated most of his publications including his "visual poem," Smoke, one of his most successful pieces of artwork. Each page is a combination of literary and visual creativity. (Example 7.)

55 See Yehudi Menuhin and Curtis W. Davis, The Music of Man (Toronto: Methuen, 1979), p. 22.

Example 7. Smoke: A Novel, pp. 62 and 63. Schafer's artwork.



In addition to those already mentioned, Schafer has other interests which he has enthusiastically pursued, including religion, philosophy, language, literature, and mythology among others. Richard Johnston asked Schafer if he did not find such a complex existence, with so many interests, unnerving. He reported:

> . . . he (Schafer) was so interested in a variety of things that he had to pursue many angles and outlets for satisfaction. Just consider the great variety of topics he has written about, that he has provided the texts for many of his vocal works, and that he is one of the finest calligraphers in the world. 56

How are the extramusical references in Schafer's scores related to these biographical details? Several examples will illustrate relationships: 1) His interest in the sound environment was described and this is evident in several of his works that include extramusical references that relate a composition to the environment. North/White includes a program that relates the work to the Canadian north, and String Quartet No. 2 (Waves) includes a program that relates the work to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. 2) His interest in E.T.A. Hoffmann and the romantic era was described, and several of the extramusical references also reveal an affinity with the romantic era. Hymn to Night uses a text by Novalis, a German romantic poet, and Adieu Robert Schumann uses a text derived from the diaries of Clara Schumann. 3) His writing career was described, and his

56 Richard Johnston, "R. Murray Schafer Talks," Composers West, Vol. 4 no. 1 (March 1981), p. 1.

interest in literature mentioned. It is not surprising then that many of the extramusical references are linguistic, that he writes many of his own texts, and that he is drawn toward a variety of literary sources for the texts that he does not write himself.

4) Perhaps the most significant observation that can be made in describing the relationship between his life and his use of extramusical references, is that his many interests outside of music explain at least in part his tendency to include extramusical ideas in his compositions. When asked if he felt that his works were more strongly tied to the extramusical world than other contemporary composers' works, Schafer responded:

> Probably. Because I am more widely read and am generally more perceptive and interested in the world outside music than many others who have obnubilated themselves inside the craft. 57

Through his use of extramusical references his music clearly becomes more personal and autobiographical in nature. As the extramusical references are described in future chapters, other relationships with his biography as described here will be evident.

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57 R. Murray Schafer, correspondence with the author, Sept. 4, 1983.

CHAPTER 3

Extramusical References in Relation to Style Development and Characteristics

The authors quoted in Chapter one cited extramusical ideas as important characteristics of Schafer's compositions.[58] In this chapter, the extramusical references will be discussed in relation to the development of his style, and in relation to two general qualities of his music. This will lead to an understanding of the role of extramusical references in Schafer's overall compositional style.

He went through a rather long period of stylistic development between his earliest composition of 1952 and his first mature work considered to be Loving of 1965. During those thirteen years, he wrote approximately twenty-five compositions, some now withdrawn, gradually progressing toward stylistic maturity. One part of this progression involved the use of extramusical references: there was a gradual movement toward the more liberal use of this device, also culminating in Loving, his first work for music theatre.

58 See pp. 1-2.

Though Stephen Adams states that there was no logical or "organic" pattern in Schafer's early development,[59] it can be argued that indeed there was both logical and "organic" development toward stylistic maturity. Schafer gradually moved toward: 1) a style which exemplified the current international trends. 2) a style which freely incorporated extramusical ideas. The development was gradual and continual; it was marked by the consecutive assimilation of three international styles which existed in the twentieth-century; it assimilated these styles in consecutive order from the oldest to the newest, from most conservative to most modern; it included the gradual increase in use of extramusical references, and with the use of these references a more personal style was gained. This suggests a growth that was both logical and "organic," and that included extramusical references as a factor in both his development, and in his mature style.

Three events which occurred in 1952, the year of Schafer's first composition, illustrate three international trends that existed concurrently in the early 50s: 1) Poulenc played the solo piano part in the première of his work Aubade at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. 2) Stravinsky began to assimilate the twelve-tone technique and serialism in his work Cantata (1951-52), an example that many composers followed after Schoenberg's death

59 Stephen Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 61.

in 1951. 3) John Cage performed his radical work 4'33" in New York, in which the player remains poised to play his instrument for the length of time indicated in the title.

Because these three styles coexisted in contemporary international music when Schafer was a student, it was natural that he would become familiar and experiment with each of these styles, beginning with what was considered to be the most conservative, and progressing to what was considered to be the most avant-garde or modern. He first experimented with the neoclassical style, then 12-tone technique, and finally absorbed trends of the avant-garde movement led by John Cage, a gradual procedure that led eventually to a style distinctly his own. As he experimented with each style, there was a gradual change in his approach to the use of extramusical references.

His earliest works in a neoclassical style reflect an admiration for Poulenc and other French composers of the group "Les Six." In this earliest period, Schafer did not use extramusical references to a notable degree, preferring the more "classical" approach of absolute works. He wrote Polytonality (1952), a short work for solo piano, and Concerto for Harpsichord and Eight Wind Instruments (1954).

Between 1956 and 1958, while in Vienna, he began to move in the direction of the German expressionist movement. At this time, he showed a preference for using extramusical references in the form of texts in his music. His most successful works written

between 1956 and 1960 were those which included texts, including Three Contemporaries, Minnelieder, and Kinderlieder. His only other work of this period was Sonatina for Flute and Harpsichord, indicating the continuation of the absolutist approach and the neoclassical style.

Not only did he tend to include texts more often, but the relation of the texts to the music became more intricate and complex as two characteristics of the German expressionist movement became evident in his works: "subjectivism" and "intense, direct expression."[60] In Three Contemporaries, for example, on the last vocal note in the movement entitled "Ezra Pound," the vocal line is marked glissando, then "disintegrating into high lunatic laughter." (Example 8.) This effect evokes Ezra Pound's incarceration in an American mental hospital, an event which is alluded to in the text.

In 1959 Schafer wrote an adagio movement for string orchestra in memory of his former teacher, Alberto Guerrero, in a style reminiscent of Mahler. For the first time he included an extramusical reference in a work without text. He preceded the music, on page one of the score, with the following linguistic reference: ". . . 'And now I am eager to die into the deathless. . . .' Tagore." It is brief and it is ambiguous, but it adds a linguistic extramusical reference to an otherwise abstract work. His

60 The characteristics of expressionism are stated by Arnold Whittall in the article "Expressionism," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 6, p. 333.

Example 8. Three Contemporaries, p. 19. Vocal line glissando "disintegrating into lunatic laughter." Music reflects the meaning of the text.

extramusical references would gradually become more personal in nature.

With his assimilation of German ideas, it was not surprising that he adopted the 12-tone method in 1960 in his work Protest and Incarceration. From this year the extramusical element in his scores is consistent. As a text for the two songs with orchestra he used poems which were given to him by a Romanian woman when he was touring her native country. They were given to her by political dissenters, and she had smuggled them out of

prisons. In Brébeuf, for baritone and orchestra, Schafer used a text that was on a Canadian subject, derived from the diaries and reports of St. Jean de Brébeuf, a Jesuit priest who first visited Canada in 1625. In addition to texts, both of these works include linguistic references in the form of program notes that provide additional information about the texts, drawing attention to their importance.

There is evidence that Schafer was aware of the controversy that surrounded the use of extramusical references at this time in his career. In his interviews with British composers, he included questions on this issue. He asked John Ireland: "Many of your compositions bear descriptive titles. . . . You must not be averse to programme music." Ireland replied that the titles were given because publishers liked them at the time they were written, and that "they just give some idea of the emotions involved." Schafer pursued the idea and asked: "But do you object to your music being listened to programmatically?" Ireland replied "Of course not."[61] The positive responses may have encouraged Schafer to be freer in his use of extramusical references.

He wrote his first work for orchestra (no text) in 1962 and, significantly, decided to use extramusical references. He used a descriptive title, Canzoni for Prisoners, and included an

61 R. Murray Schafer, British Composers in Interview (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 33.

CANZONI FOR PRISONERS

Five Movements for Orchestra

PROGRAMME NOTE:

CANZONI FOR PRISONERS was written in 1961-62. It was my first orchestral work and it consists of five interconnected sections, played without a break. The work is based on a series of 76 notes, which forms the material out of which each section is constructed.

The prisoners I had in mind in the title were prisoners of conscience--that is, non-violent objectors in any land who are imprisoned merely because they disagree with the particular political regime under which they are forced to live. As all political systems are united in eliminating radical thinking, no country has a monopoly on prisoners of conscience. They are closer than you think. This situation accounts for the sombre character of the work.

R. Murray Schafer

introductory program note explaining the title and explicitly defining an extramusical idea as the reason for the "sombre character of the work." (Example 9.)

Example 9. Canzoni for Prisoners. Program note. Schafer's first orchestral work includes a reference to the extramusical world.

His final serial work of this early period (1960-62) is Five Studies on Texts by Prudentius (1962). In this work he determined structural components of the work by referring to the symbolic meanings of the text. The work is for four flutes placed in four corners of the performance space, which adds a spatial element to the work. In the movement entitled "The City of Bethlehem" the spatial movement of the music is circular, representing the centrality of Bethlehem and of Christ. He achieves this effect in the following manner. Each flute enters consecutively, each entry separated by an interval of a perfect fourth, so that the sound travels around the room in a circular movement from flute 4 to 3 to 2 to 1 to 4 and so on. This pattern continues throughout the movement to measure 14, the climax, on the words "This city gave birth to Christ." Here the flutes play simultaneously, then the direction of the movement reverses with flute 1 leading, followed by flute 2 and so on. The continual line of the circle is represented by each flute sustaining its note until the next begins, with a diminuendo indicated at the end of each note so that there is an overlapping effect. (Example 10.) With this work Schafer adopted a more creative and original approach toward the possibilities that existed in uniting poetry and music.

Partly as a reaction against the strict procedures of 12-note serialism, Schafer began experimenting with John Cage's avant-

Example 10. Five Studies on Texts by Prudentius. Third movement "The City of Bethlehem," mm. 1-6, p. 16. Circular movement of the music between flutes represents the centrality of Bethlehem and Christ described in the text. Text determines structural aspects of the work.

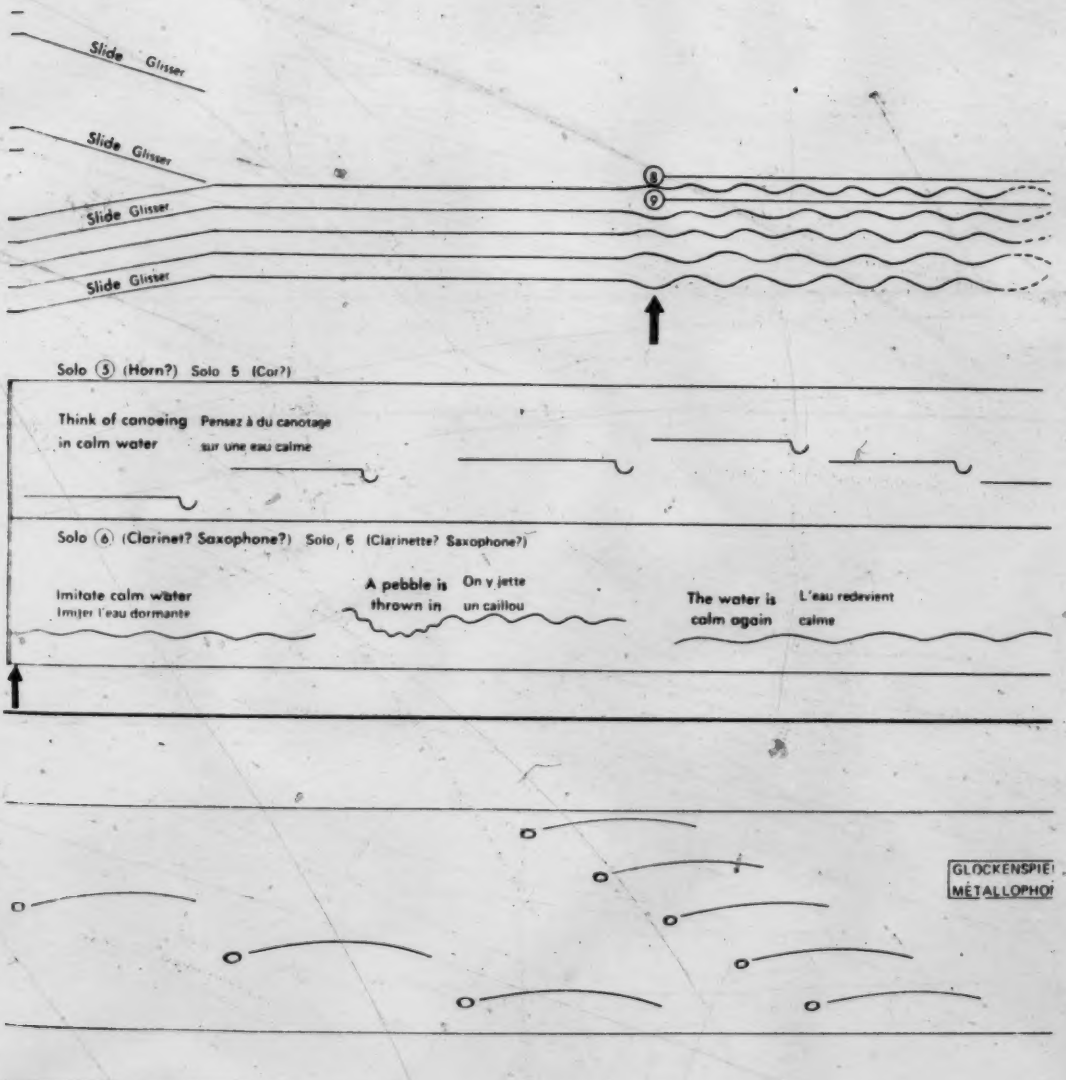
garde theories when he returned to Canada (beginning in his works of late 1962). He studied the works of Cage, Boulez, Stockhausen, Berio and Earle Brown and began to use their ideas in his compositions and in his new approach to music education.

Extramusical ideas became more prevalent. In his educational work for youth orchestra, Statement in Blue, he used extramusical references to allow the young performers to create their own musical interpretations, instructing them in the score to imitate a bird climbing slowly into the sky then gliding to earth again; to imitate calm water then a pebble thrown in; and to imitate soft rain falling. (Example 11.) Though this is clearly for music education purposes, encouraging creativity, it shows that Schafer approved of the inclusion of score directions which referred to extramusical ideas, a technique he has continued to use both in his educational works and in those not intended for educational use.

Another development in Schafer's music which involved extramusical references was his interest in the medium of music theatre, a direction the new music had followed.[62] He wrote Loving in 1965, including visual and theatrical extramusical references in addition to the use of a text. This was the first text that Schafer wrote himself, and he claimed it was of primary

62 For a discussion of the twentieth-century development toward music theatre, see David Cope, New Directions in Music, pp. 127-203; or Reginald Smith Brindle, The New Music, pp. 146-152.

Example 11. Statement in Blue. Score directions refer to extramusical ideas.



importance in this work:

> I think really what I was interested in doing there was accompanying a text which I had created, and trying to find those points at which the nervous systems of music and language touch. 63

Two developments can be observed in Schafer's use of extramusical references between 1952 and 1965. One is a progression in the importance of text in relation to the music. In his first two years of composition in the neoclassical style (1952-54), texts were not usually included. With the assimilation of German expressionist ideas, he began to favour works with text (1954-1960), and the text gradually became more important in relation to the musical material. From 1960, texts became more personal in nature and he included introductory program notes that drew attention to their sources. In Five Studies on Texts by Prudentius a refined and detailed structural relationship between the text and the music was explained, and finally in Loving, Schafer placed primary importance on text representation.

The second observation concerns Schafer's instrumental works. Again in his earliest neoclassical works there are no extramusical references. He included a brief linguistic reference in a work for strings, In Memoriam Alberto Guerrero (1959), and in his first orchestral work, Canzoni for Prisoners (1962), he included an introductory program note and a descriptive title relating the work, though vaguely, to an external event. He

63 Quoted in Stephen Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 92.

took the final step in Statement in Blue, after absorbing the avant-garde theories of John Cage's movement, by including in the score numerous extramusical references in instructions to the young performers.

A third trend which began with Loving was his predilection for music theatre with its abundance of extramusical ideas.

Thus the parallel developments of Schafer's overall style and his use of extramusical references have been illustrated. The next question that arises is that of the relationship between his mature style and the use of extramusical references.

Adams noted two "general qualities" which Schafer has consistently displayed throughout his career:

> The first is a seemingly inexhaustible capacity for surprise. . . . A second quality of his music is its audience-appeal. [64]

The remainder of this chapter will discuss the relationship between these two qualities and the use of extramusical references.[65]

From Schafer's descriptions of his own and other composers' music, it can be seen that he values the radical and unusual qualities which create the element of surprise in a work. In a review of music by Harry Partch, he praised that composer's

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64 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. viii.

65 There is a certain amount of speculation involved in discussing the qualities of "surprise" and "audience-appeal" since what is surprising or appealing to one person might not be so to another person. It can be assumed that Adams is referring here to a general impression made by the music on what would be considered a general audience.

ability to uproot tradition:

> This is the fun of being an artist; one can uproot logic and progress and start at alpha or kappa or omicron or wherever one pleases. 66

When an interviewer asked Schafer what kind of music he preferred, Schafer's response was: ". . . music that is created perilously; music created by composers who risk everything: dangerous music."[67] He has maintained this spirit throughout his career.

In naming this first quality, Adams adds that it occurs "wholly apart from the qualities of the music itself."[68] Is this not contradictory? Can a general quality of a composer's music exist regardless of the qualities of the music itself? Perhaps the explanation lies in the extramusical element, though Adams does not mention this. If it is the extramusical ideas which create the "inexhaustible capacity for surprise," then Adams must consider the extramusical element to be "wholly apart from the qualities of the music." As this thesis will show, the extramusical idea does not exist apart from the musical materials of a composition. Both the extramusical references and the qualities of the music itself do indeed contribute to both elements named by Adams. The following example illustrates this.

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66 R. Murray Schafer, "Review of record of Harry Partch," Canadian Music Journal, Vol. 3 (Winter 1959), p. 56.

67 "R. Murray Schafer: A Portrait," Musicanada, Vol. 14 (October 1968), p. 9.

68 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. viii.

String Quartet No. 1 exemplifies the "surprising" quality in Schafer's music. It has extramusical references that could be described as representing an unusual or surprising approach to the string quartet medium. In the notes to the score Schafer writes:

> It should give the impression of players locked together, with each trying unsuccessfully to break away from the others. . . . The final section may be thought of as snapshots of previous events. . . . At the very end the 'camera' goes on snapping even though the 'film' has run out. Ergo, for the pauses between the final snaps the players should remain absolutely motionless.

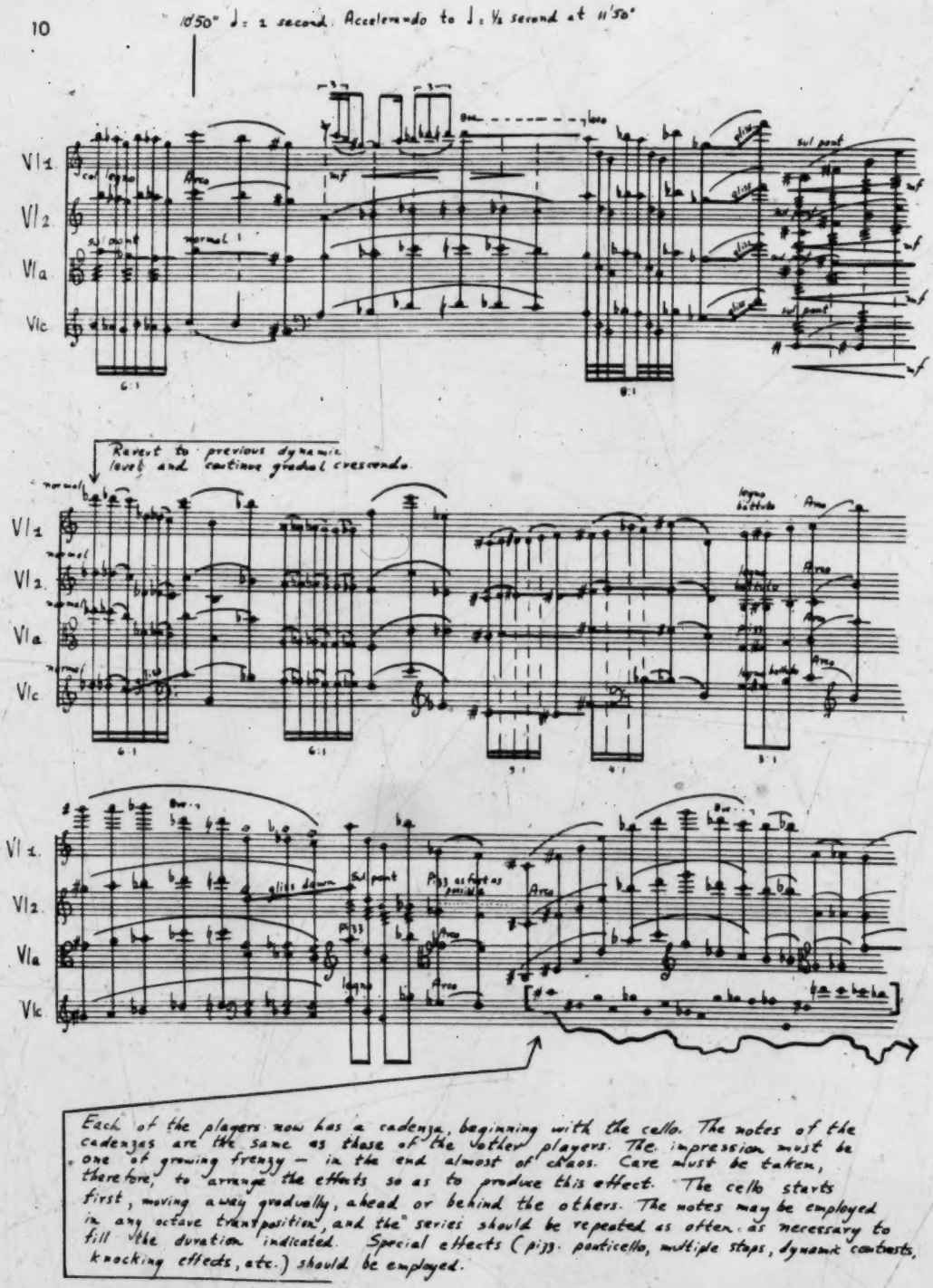
This reference alone does not indicate an original approach. The musical material also contains elements that contribute to the general quality of surprise or originality.

One such passage is the extended unison of the third section, beginning at 9'20". It lasts for over three minutes, or for approximately one third of the entire work (instruments play in unison or octaves). Beginning at ca. 12', each instrument begins a cadenza, using the same notes as those of the other players, so that all four instruments continue to play the same notes. (Example 12.) Schafer talked about this passage in an interview, describing it as original and surprising, even to himself when he wrote it:

> I said to myself, Schafer, what are you doing writing these pages and pages of unison for the four instruments. The real strokes in art, I believe, have been done by someone who has dared to do what no one has done before. 69

69 Tape 1018A, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

Example 12. String Quartet No. 1, p. 10. Extended unison passage.

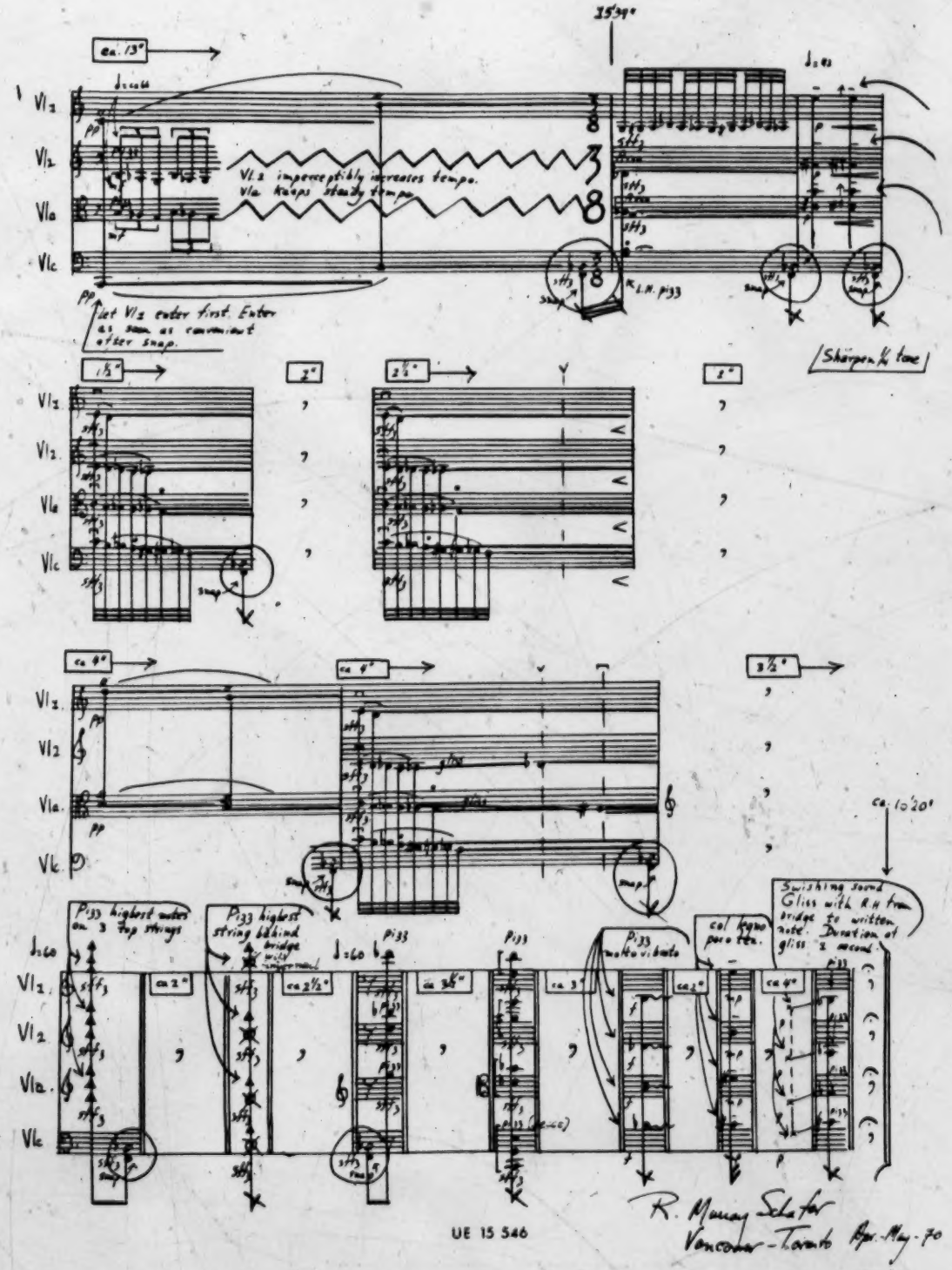

10
10'50" ♩. = 2 seconds. Accelerando to ♩. = ½ second at 11'50"
Vl 1.
Vl 2.
Vla.
Vlc.
Revert to previous dynamic level and continue gradual crescendo.
Each of the players now has a cadenza, beginning with the cello. The notes of the cadenzas are the same as those of the other players. The impression must be one of growing frenzy — in the end almost of chaos. Care must be taken, therefore, to arrange the effects so as to produce this effect. The cello starts first, moving away gradually, ahead or behind the others. The notes may be employed in any octave transposition, and the series should be repeated as often as necessary to fill the duration indicated. Special effects (pizz. particello, multiple stops, dynamic contrasts, knocking effects, etc.) should be employed.

The ending is unusual because of its reference to the camera and to the film which has run out. But it is also unusual because of the form which results from this effect. The work reaches a frenzied, chaotic climax at 14'10", with the completion of three distinct sections. This is followed by a cadenza, in which short passages of the preceding sections are quoted, beginning with the opening chromatic passage of the work. Each quotation is introduced by a sharp, sforzando, pizzicato played on the violoncello. This occurs eleven times. The opening motive is again played, and eleven shorter quotations are introduced again by the cello snap, between varying lengths of silence. The last seven gestures are unison pizzicato chords (the second to last is col legno), again separated by varying lengths of silence and occasional cello snaps. (Example 13.) The silence anticipates the ending, but the irregular patterns create a lack of direction toward an ending gesture or cadence. Schafer said: "I wanted to keep that bow of tension from the beginning to the end, so that it never lets you go."[70] Adams described the ending: "The silence thus arouses anticipation, leaving the audience uncertain when the quartet is ended."[71] The brief quotations are similar to a recapitulation in function, but the "camera" effect is original.

70 Tape 1018A, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

71 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 127.

Example 13. String Quartet No. 1, p. 15. Unusual ending.



Thus the extramusical references may signify an approach to the string quartet medium which is surprising, but the musical material also exemplifies this quality. Adams' statement that Schafer's capacity for surprise is wholly apart from the qualities of the music itself may indicate that it is the extramusical references that contribute to this quality, but seems to overlook certain aspects of the music.

There are many other examples of surprising or unusual extramusical references, especially in his instrumental works. When the manager of the Montreal Symphony asked Schafer in 1968: "Why don't you guys write something that audiences want to hear, like Strauss, for example?" he must have been surprised and possibly even shocked when Schafer submitted a work entitled Son of Heldenleben that included a long program note that mocked Strauss's self-indulgence.[72] Though some who thought the work was disrespectful and pretentious wanted to cancel its first performance, it was performed and well-received by the audience. Symphony managers were hoping he would write "Son of Beethoven," for his next commission, but he did not.

In his next work for orchestra, No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes, the extramusical idea referred to in the title and in the introductory program note is again surprising. The work was inspired by another request from a symphony manager: "that the work be no longer than ten (10) minutes." In the introductory

72 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 110.

notes Schafer made it clear that he resented the attitude of managers and audiences in general toward contemporary Canadian music. The form of the piece is based on a protest against the manager's request.

North/White might be described as surprising because of its extramusical association. Schafer wrote in the program note that the work "is inspired by the rape of the Canadian north." His tone in the note is angry and defiant, and the sound of a snowmobile contributes to the evocation of the mood and the event described in the program note.

All of his instrumental works have some quality in the extramusical reference which could justifiably be described as surprising. In East, for orchestra, the pitches are derived from a text taken from the Hindu religious text, the Isha-Upanishad. Elements of String Quartet No. 2 are derived from wave measurements, and elements of the orchestral work Train are derived from a Canadian Pacific train schedule. In Cortège the masked players act out a ritualistic drama. Music for Wilderness Lake requires a novel approach to the concert tradition including a hike to a wilderness lake, and Situational Music for Brass requires that the performers begin outside the concert hall, gradually moving into the hall. String Quartet No. 3 includes a variety of theatrical gestures.

The second quality named by Adams is also related to Schafer's use of extramusical references. Adams suggests the following three reasons for "audience-appeal" in his works: programmatic subject matter, lyrical expression, and theatricality. Two of these involve extramusical ideas.

Why would the use of an extramusical reference result in audience appeal? The answer to this question is simply that it gives the audience a concrete image or idea to associate with the music. The understanding of a composition in terms of its structural properties is beyond the average listener. Schafer is concerned that he write music that "speaks directly,"[73] and he is also aware of the problem that exists between contemporary audiences and contemporary music: "There is no denying that contemporary music has difficulty in making contact with its audience."[74] Schafer realized the problem early in his career, when Loving was not a success with audiences. He was concerned because they did not understand the work:

> Many people viewing the television version thought it didn't work. I am inclined to think that was because they didn't work. Television encourages slovenliness. An artist can't be concerned about an audience that doesn't bring its brains to his work. Loving is not a work which falls into the laps of its audience. . . . I think I may have broken some new ground with it, but so long as the porcine managers of opera companies refuse to give audiences a proper chance to make its acquaintance, I shall remain a minority of one. 75

73 "R. Murray Schafer: A Portrait," Musicanada, Vol. 14 (October 1968), p. 9.

74 R. Murray Schafer, "The Philosophy of Stereophony," West Coast Review, Vol. 1 (Winter 1967), p. 16.

75 R. Murray Schafer, "The Theatre of Confluence," Canada Music Book, Vol. 9 (Fall-Winter, 1974), pp. 33-34.

Since then, many writers, in addition to Adams, have commented on the accessibility of Schafer's music. Barry Edwards reviewed a recording of Schafer's works Hymn to Night and Adieu Robert Schumann:

> Both provide ample proof of the composer's deep sense of conviction as a creative personality, not only to his own artistic credo, but to the society for which he writes. Not for him the ivory-tower aproach to music, for both these works are among his most immediately accessible to date. 76

Edwards remarked on an "ivory-tower approach to music," praising Schafer for avoiding that tendency. Schafer has often stated a preference for a more "intuitional" than academic approach to composition:

> . . . as music becomes the subject of more and more psychological and scientific speculation, less and less purely intuitional music gets written. 77

He praised Harry Partch's "unbookish quest for the muse":

> It is refreshing, too, to have a few outdoor composers, a few musical secretaries of nature these days when inspired moments of so many composers seem to occur within two feet of a book or someone else's scores. There is something wholesomely clean and naturopatheic about so unbookish a quest for the muse. 78

So Schafer has not been particularly concerned with writing academic, scholarly music. This is not to suggest that his music is not worthy of study, but rather that he is concerned that

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76 Barry Edwards, Review of record with works by R. Murray Schafer, Music Magazine (January-February 1982), p. 22.

77 R. Murray Schafer, "Review of Conversations with Igor Stravinsky," Canadian Music Journal, Vol. 4 (Summer 1960), p. 75.

78 R. Murray Schafer, Review of record of Harry Partch, Canadian Music Journal, Vol. 3 (Winter 1959), p. 57.

his music speak to the average listener. He believes it is important that music take a stand on ethical and aesthetic issues, "thus they take on that important perspective often ignored by those swallowed up in the technology of their craft."[79] Alan Gillmor described Schafer's "social consciousness, which motivates and informs all of his activities," and Udo Kasemets wrote: "Schafer likes to create situations where learning takes place."[80] He is a practical musician, having written works for children and for amateur performers. He commented on this in an interview:

> I think that I have always been very much interested in working in a very practical way, as you say, for amateurs, for children, and probably my music has that very close relationship; it's tied to the people that it is conceived for 81

He is a composer who seems to enjoy the idea that composers can and should communicate with society through their music:

> . . . this splendid idea of music as a sort of lyric medicine, prescriptible for the ailments of both stormy and stuffy times, is a most flattering one to musicians; for it gives us a sense of usefulness that so often our spirit tells us our profession lacks. We don't merely entertain society, we doctor it. 82

Extramusical references clearly contribute to the achievement of this goal. Schafer explains various aspects of the works

79 R. Murray Schafer, "Two Musicians in Fiction," Canadian Music Journal, Vol. 4 (Spring 1960), p. 23.

80 Alan Gillmor, Encyclopedia of Music in Canada, p. 850; and Udo Kasemets, "Review of Threnody," Canada Music Book, No. 5 (Autumn-Winter 1972), p. 205.

81 Tape 1050, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

82 R. Murray Schafer, "Two Musicians in Fiction," p. 23.

in program notes, often referring to the extramusical world. He includes translations of texts to ensure that their meaning is understood. His titles are often provocative and indicate an extramusical idea associated with a work.

Adams mentioned theatrics as an element contributing to audience-appeal. Reginald Smith Brindle described theatrical effects as a trait of the new music, and defined a relationship between its use and audience response:

> As the exponents of 'theatre' or 'theatrical-performance music' rightly point out, the visual dimension of music is no new phenomenon. Since the early civilizations, music has been a part of a ritual; in religious celebrations and pageantry, music, action, and audience reaction have been closely bound together. It is therefore logical to extend modern music through visual interest, and to try to evoke audience response of a more direct nature. The old concept of concerts performed in comparatively stiff immobility, with a completely passive audience, is regarded as obsolete. 83

When Joseph Machlis described the "audience gap" of the twentieth century, he indicated that composers are using extramusical references to bring audiences closer to appreciation of their works:

> Composers, too, have learned that, in this new, less monolithic state of affairs, it sometimes helps to give verbal clues to their listeners, in the form of descriptive titles, programmatic narratives, or analyses that suggest ways of hearing their music. 84

The use of extramusical references can quite certainly be linked to Schafer's desire to communicate with a general

83 Reginald Smith Brindle, The New Music, p. 146.

84 Joseph Machlis, Introduction to Contemporary Music (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1979), p. 466.

audience, with society. However, it would be unreasonable to suggest that the audience-appeal of his works is totally a result of extramusical references without considering the music itself. It would be more accurate to suggest that the extramusical reference is an aid to appreciating and understanding the music. The extramusical references after all do refer to the music, and if they do contribute to audience-appeal, it is as a means to an end: to the appreciation, enjoyment, and understanding (at least to some degree) of the music.

Thus, as Schafer's style developed, so did his use of extramusical references, so that his mature style is characterized by their consistent use. And the extramusical references do contribute to the two general qualities of Schafer's music that were noted by Stephen Adams: its capacity for surprise and its audience-appeal, two qualities that were shown from his writings to be important to Schafer. It was also shown that the extramusical idea only contributes to the overall effect of the musical material, and that the musical material also exemplifies the two general qualities. The extramusical references, then, should not be overemphasized as determinants of Schafer's musical style.

CHAPTER 4

Description of Extramusical References: Unorthodoxy and Diversity

That authors have emphasized the extramusical element may be due in part to the nature of the objects or ideas referred to in the extramusical references. Alan Gillmor described Schafer's extramusical ideas as exemplifying "rich and unorthodox diversity."[85] The extramusical references will be described in this chapter in groups organized according to common ideas or themes, and other composers who have used similar extramusical ideas will be mentioned with each group. This approach will serve to unify their apparent diversity and also to question their unorthodoxy as described above by Alan Gillmor.

Approximately one third of his compositions include extramusical material of a religious nature. Schafer joins many other composers of this century, inluding Stravinsky, Messiaen, Ives and Peter Maxwell Davies, who have chosen religious themes. He considers music to be the most suitable art form for the

85 Alan Gillmor, "R. Murray Schafer," Encyclopedia of Music in Canada, p. 850.

expression of religious experience:

> Music is the most spiritual of the arts and for that reason it's a natural form. It is the one form that does seem in fact to touch the religious experience more than any other. 86

> Music and religion are very closely linked. I've always thought a great deal about comparative religion, and what they mean. 87

Raised as a Christian in the Western world, he is one of many who perceive the weakening of the Christian faith. This development is noted by Christopher Dawson:

> Today Christianity seems to many a thing of the past, part of the vanishing order of the old Europe, and the new powers that are shaping the world are non-Christian or even anti-Christian. 88

The cosmopolitanism of the twentieth century has resulted in the dissemination of and interest in the doctrines of the major world religions which has resulted in the acceptance of religious pluralism:

> . . . a current which, although we are only beginning to be aware of it, is about to become a flood that could sweep us quite away unless we can through greatly increased consciousness of its force and direction learn to swim in its special and mighty surge. . . . I mean the emergence of a true cosmopolitanism, or according to the wording of my title, the Christian Church in a religiously plural world, which of course is the only world there is. 89

Ward J. Fellows described the East-West dialogue as one of the most important cultural movements of our time, and religious

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86 Tape 59, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

87 Tape 1240A, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

88 Christopher Dawson, Religion and World History, ed. by James Oliver and Christine Scott (New York: Doubleday, 1975), p. 255.

89 Willard G. Oxtoby, ed., Religious Diversity by Wilfred Cantwell Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 4-5.

understanding as the most important element in reaching agreement between the different cultures:

> The greatest continuing cultural event of our era is the gradual meeting and dialogue of Eastern and Western cultures. . . . Nothing is more fundamental, pervasive and important in East-West understanding than religion, whether the participants in dialogue believe or not. 90

Thus Schafer's interest in Christianity and in other world religions is not unusual, or unorthodox, but rather reflects a trend in religious thinking which has developed over the past two decades.

His sources include important sacred writings of major world religions. In the following section his religious works are briefly discussed in chronological order in two groups: those with Christian themes and those with non-Christian themes.

Four Songs on Texts of Tagore (1962) is the earliest work indicating Schafer's interest in Eastern thought. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was an Indian poet, musician, philosopher, and religious leader whose reputation became international in scope when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. A biographer noted the "diversity of his creative achievement" and his "profound and many-sided influence on every aspect of Indian culture."[91] His stature and influence has been compared with that of Mahatma Gandhi.[92]

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90 Ward J. Fellows, Religions East and West (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. vii.

91 Vishwanath S. Naravane, An Introduction to Rabindranath Tagore (Delhi: The Macmillan Co. of India Ltd., 1977), p. vii.

92 Ibid., p. 1.

Tagore studied in Britain and was well-known in British literary circles, where Ezra Pound was amongst his friends. It is likely that Schafer was introduced to Tagore's works by Pound. Schafer set the best-known of Tagore's publications: his Gitanjali, a collection of poems, his first work to be translated into English, and the work for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Gitanjali means "song offerings," and describes the poet's quest for truth and for the deity, in melodic verse. The religious beliefs expressed in the poems are of the Hindu faith, one of the oldest living religions in the world. Selections of Tagore's verse are also used by Schafer in Lustro and in Gita, where Tagore's recorded voice is heard on electronic tape.

For Gita, Schafer used the "best-known and loved"[93] Hindu scripture as the source of his text: the Bhagavad Gita or "Song of the Lord" Krishna. "No other book, it is said, has so firm a hold on the faithful Hindu of the literate and educated classes."[94] The text is sung in the original Sanskrit, with translations provided in the score. It describes the search for purity of spirit by the hero Arjuna as he prepares for war. Stephen Adams remarked that the Gita had "long ago entered Western consciousness through the romanticism of the Schlegels in Germany and Emerson in the United States."[95]

93 Ward J. Fellows, Religions East and West, p. 90.

94 Ibid.

95 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 145.

He was next inspired by Buddhism, another major world religion, when he wrote From the Tibetan Book of the Dead (1968). Fellows writes that Buddhism "both in doctrine and organization is a universal religion, . . . now finding a ready ear among many in the West."[96] In Tibet, where "everything begins and ends with religion,"[97] a Buddhist death rite is performed in which words from a sacred text are whispered to the dying person providing instructions for the attainment of salvation. This sacred text, the Bardo-Thödol, or Tibetan Book of the Dead, is the source of the text of Schafer's work. The text is sung in Tibetan, with English translations in the score.

When Schafer travelled to Persia in 1968 on a Canada Council grant he studied the religious history of that country. His work In Search of Zoroaster (1971) describes the historical foundation of the ancient religion of that country, Zoroastrianism, considered to be the source of many Christian doctrines.

In 651 A.D. Persia fell to Islamic forces and Zoroastrianism was ended (a few small groups in Iran and in India still practise the Zoroastrian religion). Another aspect of Persia's history of religion involves the development of various sects of Islam, one of which was Sufism. This is the subject of

96 Ward J. Fellows, Religions East and West, p. 131.

97 Tsung-Lien Shen and Shen-Chi Liu, Tibet and the Tibetans (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1953), p. 66.

Schafer's next work with an Eastern religious theme. A major figure in the development of Sufism in the thirteenth century was Jalal al-Din Rumi, a saint, mystic, and poet of stature. He wrote one of the source books of the Sufi sect, entitled Divan i Shams i Tabriz, also the title of the work by Schafer based on that source. The triptych Lustro includes Divan i Shams i Tabriz, and derives its texts from several of Rumi's writings.

Schafer returned to the Hindu faith for the source of his last work based on Eastern religious sources, appropriately entitled East. He chose the Upanishads, one of the major sacred scriptures of the faith considered to be the most popular Hindu text in the Western world:

> Western thought has tended to focus on the Upanishads as the most important and typical literature of Hinduism, because they are more abstract and universal in their appeal, less parochial and Indian, and perhaps more open to the Western mind. 98

The Upanishads describe a path to spiritual enlightenment through jnana or knowledge. In this orchestral work Schafer derived the melodic pitches from two sentences of the Isha-Upanishad: "The self is one. Unmoving it moves faster than the mind."

These are all of Schafer's works which have extramusical references that relate to Eastern religions. In summary,

98 Ward J. Fellows, Religions East and West, p. 86.

two works have texts derived from the sacred writings of the Hindu faith: in the composition Gita, the text is taken from the Bhagavad Gita, and in the composition East, the text is taken from the Upanishads. A third work, Four Songs on Texts by Tagore, has a text by Rabindranath Tagore, also based on the Hindu faith. A fourth work, From the Tibetan Book of the Dead, includes a Buddhist death rite. And the final two works are based on historical Persian religions: the work In Search of Zoroaster describes the ancient Zoroastrian religion, and Lustro includes texts by Jalal al-Din Rumi, a leader of the Sufi sect of the Islamic religion. These six works are based on three major topics: Hinduism, Buddhism and Persian religions. There is also a common theme that exists within the texts: they all express a desire to escape to salvation, and the search for spiritual oneness. This theme recurs in various forms in other works by Schafer.

His works on Christian themes need only be described briefly. It is presumed that these sources will be familiar to the reader. Six works are included: Brébeuf, (1961), Five Studies on Texts by Prudentius (1962), Yeow and Pax (1969), Psalm (1972), Apocalypsis (1978), and Jonah (1979). The Eastern influence predominated between 1967 and 1973, while the works based on Western Christian religion are mostly early, 1961-62, or later, 1972-79, in Schafer's career. The

last four works listed above -- Yeow and Pax, Psalm, Apocalypsis and Jonah -- include Biblical texts based on the following sections of the Bible: Isaiah, Psalm 148, the Revelation of St. John, and the Book of Jonah. The earlier two works are based on secondary sources of the Christian faith: the text of Brébeuf was derived from the diaries and reports of St. Jean de Brébeuf, a Christian missionary to Canada in the seventeenth century; and the text of Four Studies on Texts by Prudentius was taken from Prudentius' collection of poems, Tituli Historium, written in the fourth century on Christian themes. Schafer's teacher, Peter Racine Fricker, had also set texts by Prudentius.

Similar to the Eastern religious texts, these also have a common theme of salvation, revelation, and the path to spiritual sanctity.

Another important subject of Schafer's extramusical references is the environment. This aspect of his works is linked to his soundscape research, and included are the works Epitaph for Moonlight (1968), Miniwanka (1971), North/White (1973), and Train (1976). (Music for Wilderness Lake and Situational Music for Brass are related to the environment, and are included in the next group). Epitaph for Moonlight and Miniwanka refer to the moon and water respectively, North/White to Canada's northern environment, String Quartet No. 2 (Waves) to wave movement, and Train to the Canadian environment and geography.

Is this an "unorthodox" source of extramusical reference? It appears not. The environment has been the inspiration for many composers throughout the history of music, and many have included extramusical references, usually in descriptive titles, that describe the sources: Debussy's La Mer and Au Clair de la Lune, Sibelius' Finlandia, Ives' Three Places in New England and Central Park in the Dark, for example.

A third group of extramusical references are derived from the composer's desire to protest or comment on some element of society. Schafer describes himself as an "engagé" artist:

> In many ways I think I would call myself, at least 50% of the time what the French would term an engagé artist, someone who is engaged to a political party or has a political point of view or a social point of view and believes that art can be used to express that or perhaps to change people, transform them. [99]

Protest and Incarceration is a statement against political tyranny, as is Canzoni for Prisoners. Threnody is an anti-war protest and North/White, which was included with the previous group, is a "save the environment" protest. In 1969 Schafer began to protest the attitude of society toward Canadian music and the traditional concert "ritual."[100] This protest began with Son of Heldenleben, and No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes.

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99 Tape 59, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

100 "Ritual" is the word Schafer often uses to describe today's concert practices.

In the work In Search of Zoroaster he attempted to challenge the performance tradition by making the audience unnecessary. Cortège has no indication of an explicit "protesting" tone; however the implicit desire to challenge the status quo remains intact: it is an orchestral work which is as much theatrical as it is musical. Situational Music for Brass begins with the performers outside the concert hall. In Music for Wilderness Lake, Schafer's goal was to change the entire context of traditional performance practice. Again his tone in the introductory note is one of dissatisfaction with certain aspects of music and society:

> The history of music shows that although musical styles change constantly, the contexts in which music is presented vary much less frequently. . . . The big revolutions in music history are those with the power to change performance contexts. It is these which govern performance rituals and legislate musical forms and instrumentation. One might expect musicologists to realize this but most of them are too drugged by masterpiece mania to notice whether the record is warped, the roof is rotten or the public is no longer in situ, that is, notice events which might give rise to new musical contexts causing whole banks of repertoire to be jettisoned.
>
> For many years I have been dissatisfied with current music-making practices and this dissatisfaction is apparent in several works. In No Longer Than Ten Minutes the ritual of the traditional orchestral concert was turned on itself to make it conspicuous; and in In Search of Zoroaster a new performance ritual was attempted in which the audience is rendered superfluous. Music for Wilderness Lake continues these experiments. It goes back to a time when music was performed outdoors. . . . . There is a lot of interest today in outdoor music, though the interest is centred mainly in urban settings.

This approach is not uncommon among composers of this century. As Schafer states above, "There is a lot of interest today in outdoor music." The interest in environmental sounds in the performance experience has been evident during the past two decades in works of John Cage, Pauline Oliveros, I.A. MacKenzie, and Jon Hassell among others. Certainly the works of John Cage, La Monte Young, and other experimental composers challenged the concept of the concert ritual. Many composers in this century wrote compositions which were socially or politically motivated, usually with some degree of protest: Nono's Intolleranza, Manzoni's Atomtod, Haubenstock-Ramati's America, Bartolozzi's Tutti cio che accade, Schoenberg's Survivor from Warsaw, Britten's War Requiem, Penderecki's Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima, for example.

A fourth group of works has as its common theme that of love and women. This subject was manifested early in Schafer's career in the Minnelieder, a group of love songs based on medieval German texts. Other works in this group are Loving (1965) on texts adapted from Schafer's adolescent love poems; Enchantress (1970), which uses fragments of poems by Sappho, the ancient Greek lyric poetess; Adieu Robert Schumann on texts adapted from Clara Schumann's diaries; Felix's Girls (1979) with text by the Polish-Jewish immigrant, Henry Felix; and Garden of the Heart (1981) on a text adapted from The Thousand and One Nights.

Each of these works is also related to another group as described in this chapter. Loving, Adieu Robert Schumann, and Felix's Girls are similar to the final (the fifth) group, with the theme of the "human psyche." Enchantress is similar to the first group of religious texts based on ancient literature; and Garden of the Heart is similar to the first group of Persian religious texts, adapted from The Thousand and One Nights, a book that originated in that culture.

Many composers have written on the theme of love and women, though it was much more common in the last century than it has been in this one. Examples are Henze's Elegy for Young Lovers, Tippet's A Midsummer Night's Marriage and Schoenberg's Verklärte Nacht.

The last group of works to be described are dramatic, and are based on texts mostly written by Schafer himself. The Patria series, which has occupied much of his career, is a group of six works for music theatre intended to be performed on consecutive evenings. Thus far, Patrias I and II are complete -- Patria I was completed in 1974, Patria II in 1972 -- and four works which are segments of Patria III and two works from Patria IV have been published separately. Works included in this group are: Patria I (1974), Patria II (1972), Arcana (1972), Hymn to Night (1976), La Testa d'Adriane (1977), The Crown of Ariadne (1979), Hear Me Out (1979), Beauty and the Beast (1980), Wizard Oil and Indian

Sagwa (1981), and The Princess of the Stars (1981, composed as an introduction to the series).

There are only two works which do not include Schafer's own texts. Hymn to Night has a text by the German poet Novalis (1772-1801). It describes the poet's loneliness, fear, and desire to escape into the spirit of the night, which relate to the themes of the Patria series . The text of Beauty and the Beast is another adapted from The Thousand and One Nights, the collection of stories of uncertain date and authorship also known as The Arabian Nights. These stories, which Schafer became familiar with on his tour of the Middle East, are said to have had a greater influence on Western thought than any other literary Arabic work except possibly the Koran.

There are common themes and characters in Patrias I-IV, and presumably this continuity will be sustained to the end of the series. They also have a theme in common with the religious works: the search for escape, though in these works the emphasis is not on spirituality. Two of the religious works have been incorporated by Schafer into the Patria series: Gita in Patria I and From the Tibetan Book of the Dead in Patria II. Themes in the compositions are alienation, disappointment, loneliness, darkness, and the human psyche. These are typical themes of this century, particularly of the expressionist movement. Other composers who have written works with similar themes include Berio (Laborintus II), Peter Maxwell Davies (Eight Songs for a

Mad King), and Schoenberg (Pierrot Lunaire).

In summary, the five groups of extramusical ideas described in this chapter are the following:

1) those of a religious nature, based on both Western and Eastern religions

2) those based on the environment

3) those of a "protesting" nature

4) those dealing with love and women

5) those predominantly written by Schafer for music theatre with common themes such as loneliness and the depths of the human psyche.

All of his compositions are included in one of these groups.

Thus, within a certain degree of diversity there is also unity. As for the unorthodoxy described by Gillmor,[101] the religious texts were explained in the context of twentieth-century trends in religious thinking and the sources were limited to three main topics and major writings. Other groups were explained in relation to trends in this century and other composers' use of similar ideas. This approach to the description of the extramusical references is not meant to detract from their use by Schafer in an original and creative manner. It is merely to suggest that their diversity and unorthodoxy is a matter of degree, and the degree is less than one might at first suspect.

101 See p. 60.

From the descriptions it can be seen that the extramusical ideas are interesting and thought-provoking. And an interesting and thought-provoking idea behind the composition is more likely to inspire the writing of a composition with those qualities than an unimaginative idea. The extramusical idea is an essential part of the creative process, at least for Schafer:

> Often the extramusical idea is the "idea" for a piece and since every piece has an "idea" behind it, the extra-musical thing takes precedence. Later probably the notes take over. 102

The extramusical references are artistic expressions in themselves, since they are an artist's interpretation and expression of an external idea, object, or event. But a composer is a writer of music, and probably the most interesting aspect of the extramusical references for musicians is their relationship to the musical material. As Schafer states above, eventually "the notes take over" as the extramusical idea is translated into sound structures. The remainder of this thesis examines the relationship of extramusical ideas to the musical material. The extramusical ideas may or may not be accurately described by the words "unorthodox diversity,"[103] but the way in which Schafer expresses the extramusical ideas in the musical fabric is most certainly worthy of that description.

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102 R. Murray Schafer, correspondence with the author, Sept 4, 1983.

103 See p. 60.

CHAPTER 5

Forms of Extramusical References

In Chapter one, forms of extramusical reference found in Schafer's scores were listed as the following: texts, program notes, descriptive titles, dramatic effects, score directions, and visual references. When analyzing the relation of the references to the musical material, it was found that only the first two forms mentioned, texts and program notes, were significant. In this chapter, the forms of extramusical reference will be discussed with emphasis on texts. Program notes are discussed in Chapter six.

Descriptive titles that refer to extramusical ideas are used in all of Schafer's mature works, with the exception of String Quartets No. 1 and No. 3. The title is the first and most common way of referring to a composition and it indicates both the main idea and the importance of that idea to the conception of a work. His title Enchantress, for example, suggests a woman and a seductive quality, which are important ideas in the work; La Testa d'Adriane means "the head of Adriane," which is literally

a focal point of the work since Adriane's head sits on a table, and "sings"; String Quartet No. 2 (Waves) is actually based on wave measurements and sound quality. The descriptive titles are the first clue that Schafer's works are "about something" extramusical in nature. Their significance, as to their relationship with the music, is secondary, however, because the extramusical idea referred to in the title is always further explained by another form of extramusical reference, namely, either a text or a program note.

Jacques Barzun noted that texts are and have been the most commonly used extramusical reference in music.[104] They are also the form of extramusical reference that Schafer uses most often: approximately two thirds of his works include texts. But more important than the number of texts used is the emphasis that he places on the relationship of the text to the music. This is one aspect of composition which he has found particularly interesting, and he has published several studies on the subject, including: "Ezra Pound and Music," When Words Sing, and "The Developing Theories of Absolute Rhythm and Great Bass." His article on Loving also includes a section on text setting.[105] He has perhaps been inspired to experiment with the possibilities of

104 Jacques Barzun, "The Meaning of Meaning in Music," p. 81.

105 R. Murray Schafer: "Ezra Pound and Music," Canadian Music Journal, Vol. 5 (Summer 1961); When Words Sing (Scarborough, Ont.: Berandol, 1970); "The Developing Theories of Absolute Rhythm and Great Bass," Paideuma, Vol. 1, no. 3, 1973; "Notes on the Stagework Loving," Canada Music Book, Vol. 8 (Spring-Summer), 1974, pp. 9-26.

combining language and music through his study of Ezra Pound's work on the musical properties of poetry, and perhaps by the "new vocalism" of the 1960s.[106] Also because he is a poet as well as a composer, it seems logical that the union of the two art forms, poetry and music, has been an important and successful part of his compositional career.

He views the text as a starting point for a composition:

> But ultimately what I am really doing is writing music so that the text is only a vehicle for jumping off into a musical world. 107

The following are a few examples of the many ways that he uses a text as the "springboard" for the musical fabric of a work.

Requiems for the Party Girl in its 1966 version is a set of twelve arias that later became sections of Patria II. Adams described this composition as "perhaps his best-known work apart from the pieces for youth," [108] stating that it has been recorded three times and performed by Bruno Maderna and by Pierre Boulez. The text, written by Schafer, is a prominent element. Bruce Mather described the importance of text representation in Requiems for the Party Girl:

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106 For a description of the "new vocalism," see Brindle, The New Music, pp. 162-174.

107 Tape 792, Canadian Music Centre, Calgary.

108 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 27.

> When one first looks at the work, it becomes apparent that it is a series of sound illustrations of the text. One sees very quickly that these illustrations are manifested in various forms. 109

Mather identified five techniques of text representation used by Schafer: a) direct sound imitation b) rhythmic transpositions of sounds or of emotional states c) symbolic imitation d) hidden imitation e) negation, distortion. The following example from Requiems for the Party Girl illustrates the fourth technique, "hidden imitation," between text and music in the fourth section of the work.

This song is a brief setting of the two sentences: "Everywhere I go I leave a part of myself. I am afraid that soon there will be nothing left of me." (Example 14.) The melody line consists of two statements of a 12-tone row. The first sentence is set to the pitches of the original row, and the second sentence is set to the retrograde, creating a mirror effect. The central measure, which separates the sentences, is emphasized by its separation by double bar-lines, its distinctive rhythmic figure, its dense texture, and its repetition of pitches of the row.

The instrumental pitches are the same as those of the voice line. As each pitch is sounded vocally, an instrument matches and sustains the tone, releasing when the pitch is repeated in the retrograde version of the row in the second half of the song.

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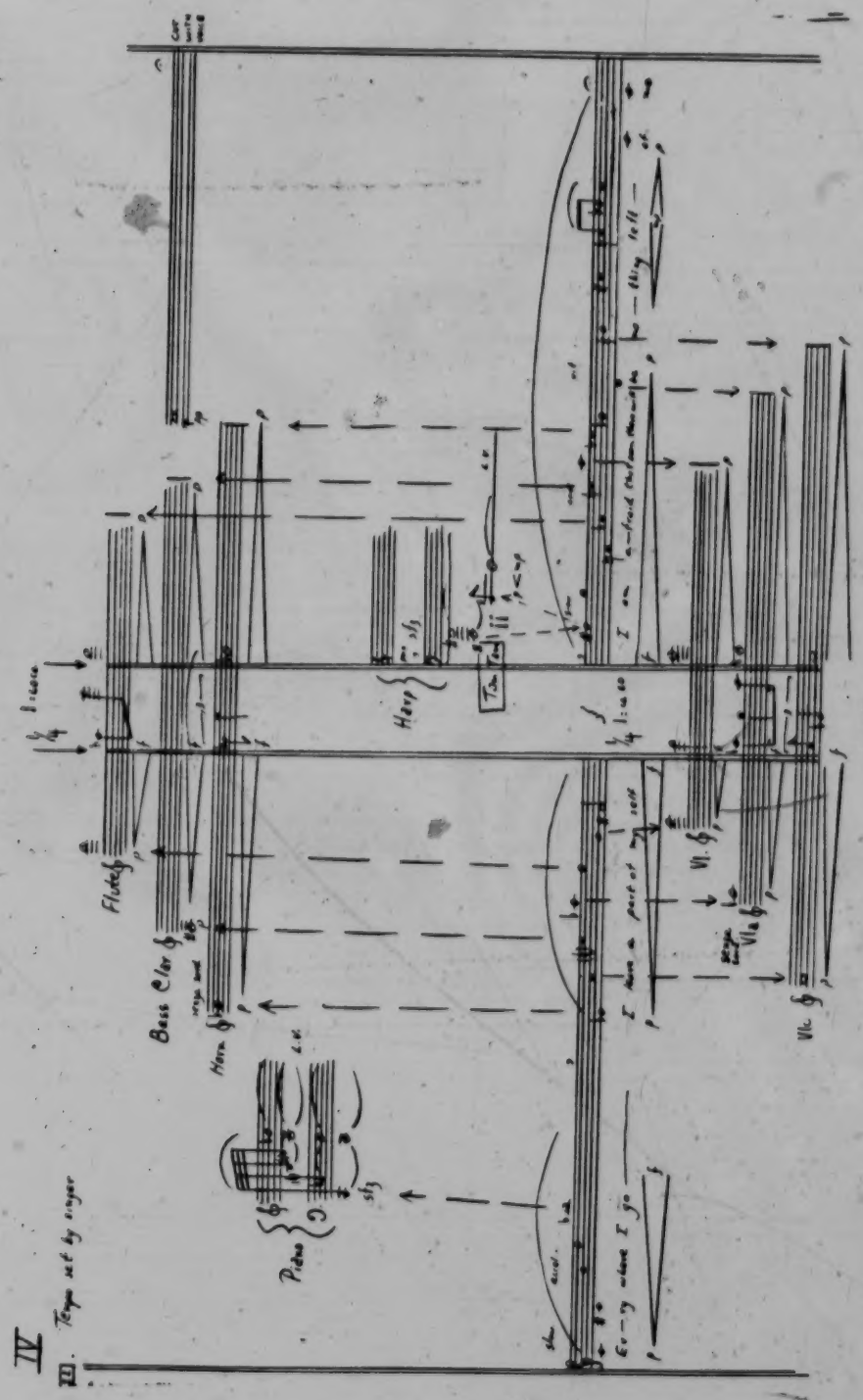
109 Bruce Mather, "Notes sur Requiems for the Party Girl de Schafer," Canada Music Book, Vol. 1 (Spring-Summer), 1970, p. 93. Translated by the author.

Example 14. Requiems for the Party Girl. Section IV. Text and Music.



After the most dense texture of the middle measure, as the instruments release their pitches one by one, the texture symbolically becomes thinner until only one instrument remains on the words "nothing is left of me."

The symmetry and balance between the sentences is achieved in the music, and can be observed visually in the score. The solo voice line begins and ends the section, the piano is balanced by the harp entry, the winds (and horn) and strings alternate entries to achieve a balance around the horizontal axis on the score. This is an intricate setting of two sentences, in which the meaning and the structure of the text determines the musical material to a great extent.

Schafer also uses texts for their sonic characteristics. He described the qualities of both sound and sense that are inherent in poetry, and emphasized the importance of considering both aspects:

> Poetry is not sound alone; it is also sense, and this obligation to both sound and sense erects an impasse between the arts of poetry and music which is more difficult to overcome than is commonly supposed . . . Music established new time laws for language. Contemporary music, in attempting to obtain a new vocal ecstasy, often distorts the text to a point where it cannot be understood at all. 110

His interest in the sound quality of language is illustrated in the work Epitaph for Moonlight. Adams provided this description

110 R. Murray Schafer, "Notes for the Stagework Loving," p. 23.

of the work's popularity:

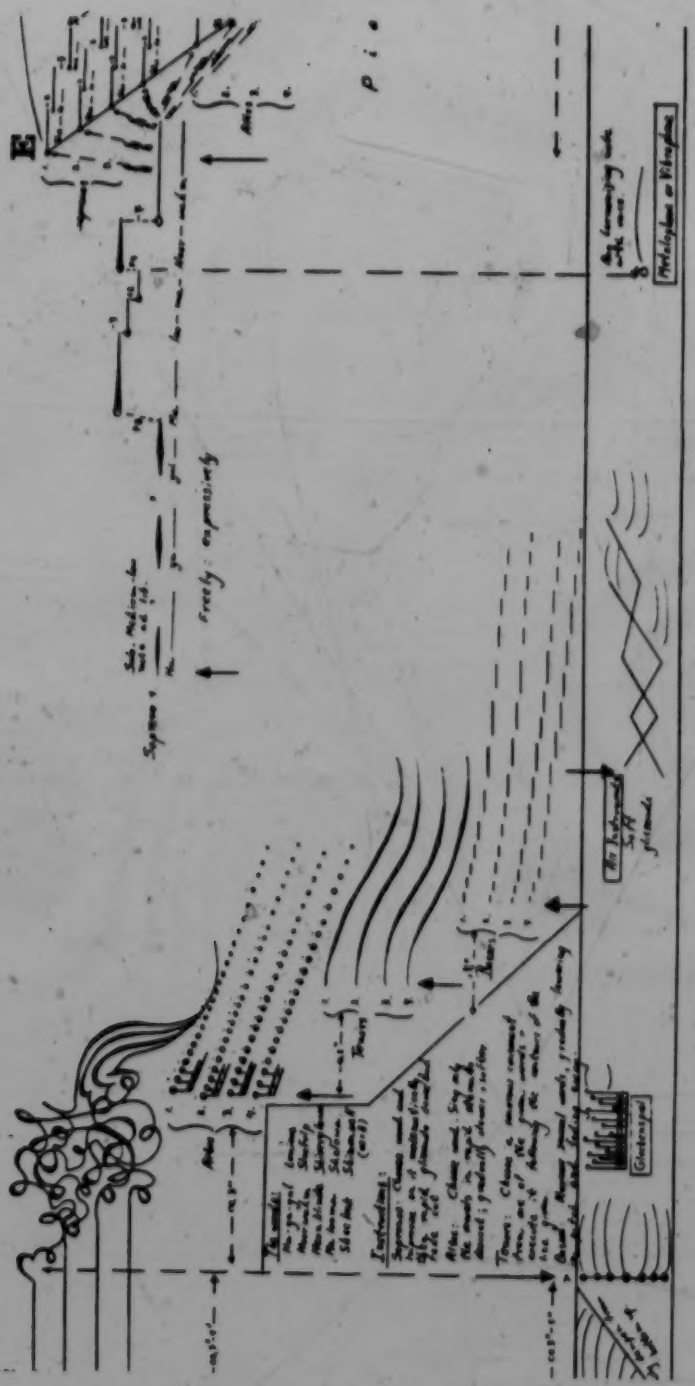
> Epitaph for Moonlight is Schafer's c#-minor prelude - probably his best-known composition. Written as a modest 'study piece for youth choir,' it has entered the repertoires of choral groups across Canada and elsewhere. Its success is well deserved, for its combination of new choralism with a charming programmatic text speaks even to the most unsophisticated audience. 111

The essential musical material in this composition is derived from the sonic qualities of words composed by school children intended to aurally evoke the qualities of the moon. He asked the members of his class to write their own private words that they thought suitably described the moon. He chose the following words to use in his composition: Nu-yu-yul, Noorwahm, Maunklinde, Malooma, Lunious, Sloofulp, Shiverglowa, Shalowa, Sheelesk, Shimonoell, and Nishmoor. He uses language, then, as a sonic representation of an extramusical object, which in this case is the moon.

The work is scored for youth chorus with optional bells, placing the emphasis on the choral fabric. No definite pitches are specified, and occasfonally interval relationships are defined. The sounds of the words that were inspired by the moon become the musical material of the work. In one passage, a three-part contrapuntal effect is achieved by juxtaposing three different sounds derived from the text. (Example 15.) The sopranos are instructed to choose one word, and improvise on it. The altos sing the vowels only. The tenors enunciate consonants, and the

111 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 160.

Example 15. Epitaph for Moonlight. Text and music.



basses murmer several words. The independence of each line is further marked by articulation and contour: the sopranos sing melismatically, altos staccato, tenors follow a gradually curved contour, and the basses murmer repeated patterns. The sound of the language is the raw material by which this musical effect is created, and the language was inspired by the moon. The musical purpose is representation, through the sound of a unique language, of moonlight.

Another example of Schafer's use of text in a different manner occurs in his work Divan i Shams i Tabriz. Here the text becomes part of a complex orchestral texture, so that it is barely distinguishable, functioning only as sound, not as denotative text. Divan i Shams i Tabriz, inspired by Schafer's trip to Turkey and Iran in 1969 and completed in 1970, was commissioned by the Vancouver Symphony but never performed by that group, apparently because of its complexity.[112] It now forms the first movement of what Schafer has called "his Parsifal,"[113] the triptych Lustro. Adams described the work:

> Each section of Lustro is an imposing piece on its own right - most especially Divan i Shams i Tabriz. But if I had to choose Schafer's single greatest composition, it would be Lustro as a whole. 114

It is scored for thirteen quintets of instruments and voices placed around the auditorium. Group ten, for example, is located

112 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 101.

113 Ibid., p. 100.

114 Ibid., p. 108.

at the back right corner of the performance space and includes three violins, Trumpet in C, and Soprano.

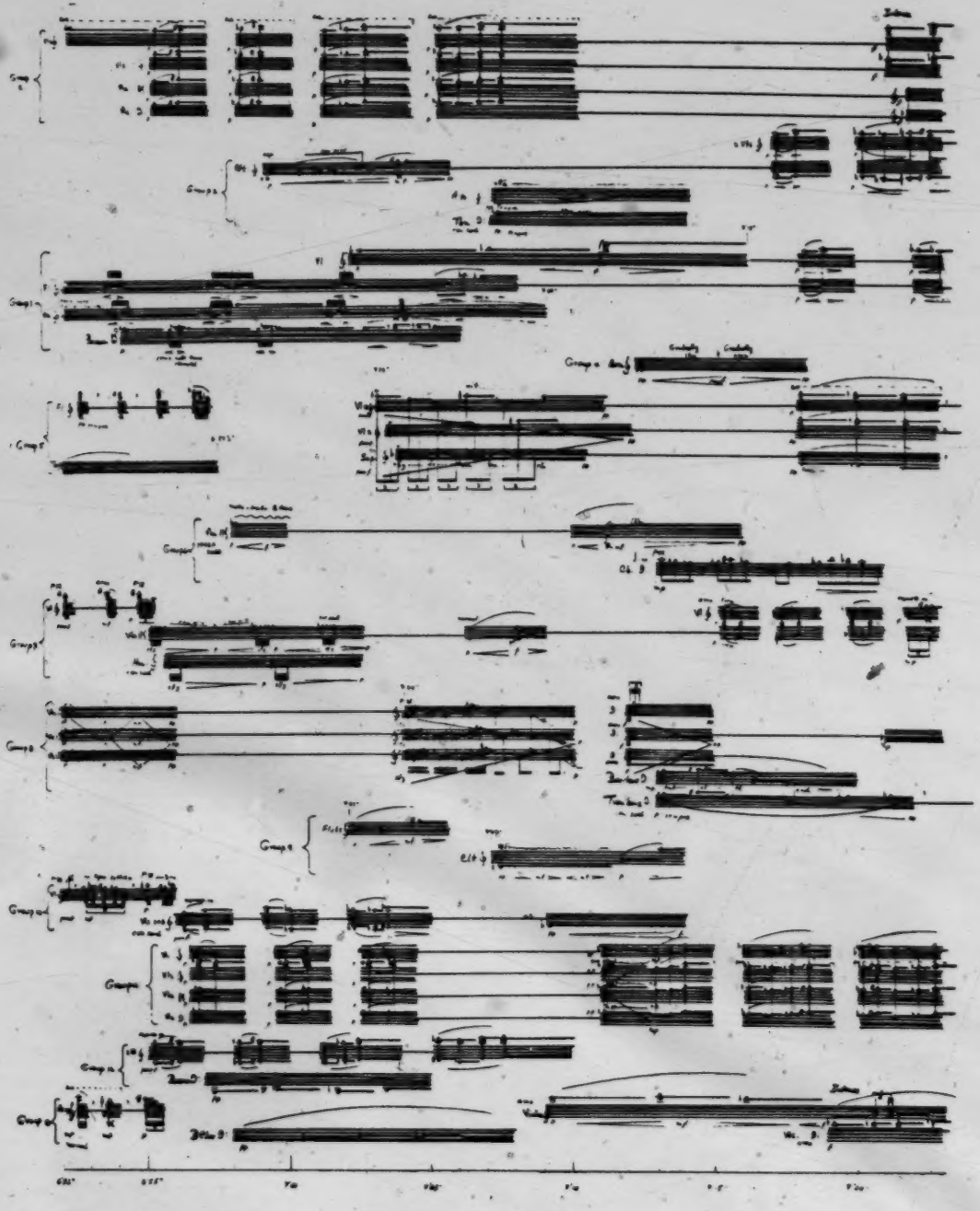
The text is a group of poems by Jalal al-Din Rumi, the Sufi poet who lived in thirteenth-century Persia. Since it is sung in Persian, it is unintelligible to most people. But Schafer explains its general meaning in the introductory note, and also explains how that meaning has affected the compositional process:

> It tells of a fusing of religious love with human love. Accordingly the piece is composed of disunited elements gradually growing together.

The words cannot be distinguished in the dense texture of the instrumental groups, and this is one of the few works in which Schafer does not provide a translation of the text. Specific words, then, are not important. Rather the general meaning of the text has affected the overall concept of the work, and the individual words of the text are significant only as sound material in the musical fabric. (Example 16.)

In Arcana and East, the construction of language is applied to the structure of the composition. Schafer assigns specific pitch(es) to specific phonemes of the text so that repeated patterns in language result in repeated musical patterns, providing melodic and harmonic unity through the repetition of certain pitches and pitch groups. Schafer explains in his introductory program note to Arcana, a work that he wrote in 1972 for the

Example 16. Divan i Shams i Tabriz, p. 16. Text and music.



Montreal International Competition in voice:

> The compositional method was as follows: each phoneme of the text was given two notes within a range of two octaves, including a few quartertones. Thus each phonemic element always has the same note or notes associated with it. Often the singer sings one of these notes while the instruments play the other. The frequency with which each phonemic recurs in the text thus gives the melodic line its character, even a sense of tonality.
>
> Motives result from frequently repeated digraphs and trigraphs. This helps to give the songs a melodic and harmonic unity which can be easily sensed, even if it cannot be followed analytically. The accompaniment is never free but forms "words," on its own; and in such places as where the singer sings texts like "I search for the formula of six words," (Song 4), the instruments scurry about trying out various combinations of letters which may provide the formula the singer is seeking. . . .

East is an orchestral work, but it derives much of its material from a text of forty-eight words. (Example 17, analytical note.) It was commissioned by the National Arts Centre Orchestra and first performed by that group in May, 1973. The pitches used are determined by the text in the following manner. Each letter is designated a pitch according to the number of times it occurs in the text. The words are then represented in the score by the pitch groups that result from the aggregate representative pitches of each of its letters. The melody consists of the forty-eight words expressed by their representative pitches.

The harmonic groups are also derived from words of the text. Repetition of "the" in the text results in the motivic function of the E A C pitch group assigned to those letters.

Schafer emphasizes this by repeating the motives in the harmony and in the accompanying horns, trumpets, and flutes, and by associating the motive with a constant rhythmic figure. The forty-eight words of the text are each punctuated by forty-eight gongs. The composer provides a diagrammatic scheme that outlines the structural relation of the text to the music (Example 17), and the work at 1' is shown in Example 18 with the appropriate letter assigned to each pitch.

The subject matter of the text is also reflected in the music. It is a meditation of a religious nature, and the music reflects this: it remains soft throughout, the sound masses are subtly and gradually shaped, and repetitive gongs and tam-tams create a hypnotic effect. "It concentrates on soft, self-consciously beautiful sonorities, spinning out an almost uniform texture for eight minutes of hypnotic ritual."[115] At 5'30" the orchestral players are instructed to whisper the first two lines of the text and although this is the only place where the text is actually included in the score, it has been shown that the relation of the text to the musical material is one of considerable detail and complexity.

These five examples illustrate only some of the methods by which Schafer unites text with music. It has been shown that both the structure of the texts and the extramusical ideas

115 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 129.

Example 17. East. Composer's explanation of text and music.

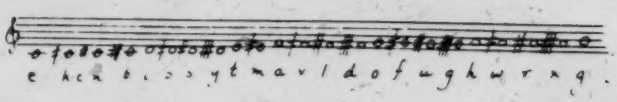
ANALYTICAL NOTE

"East" is a meditation on a text from the Isha-Upanishad.

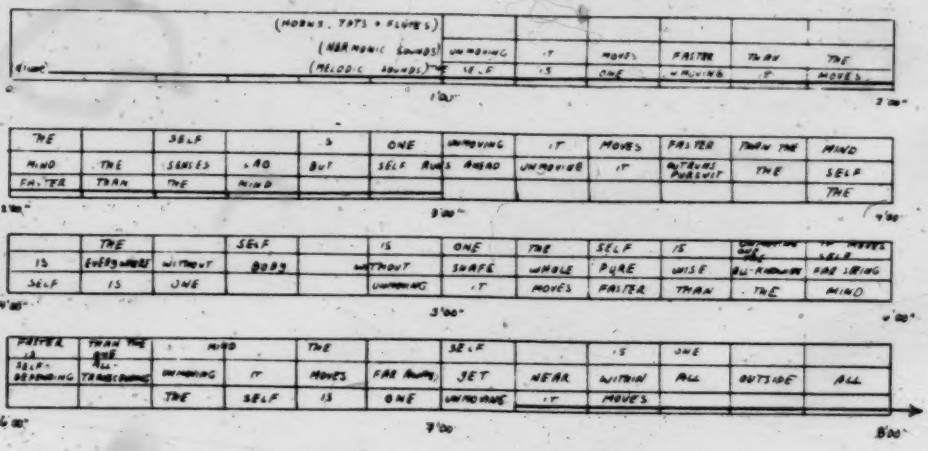
> "The self is one. Unmoving it moves faster than the mind. The senses lag but self runs ahead. Unmoving it outruns pursuit. The self is everywhere, without body, without shape, whole, pure, wise, all-knowing, far-seeing, self-depending, all-transcending. Unmoving it moves far away, yet near, within all, outside all."

The forty-eight words of the text are punctuated by forty-eight gongs, sounding approximately every ten seconds. Each letter in the text is given a pitch value depending on its frequency of occurance in the text, and the note-patterns arising from the words form the harmonic and melodic material which the orchestra plays and occasionally sings.

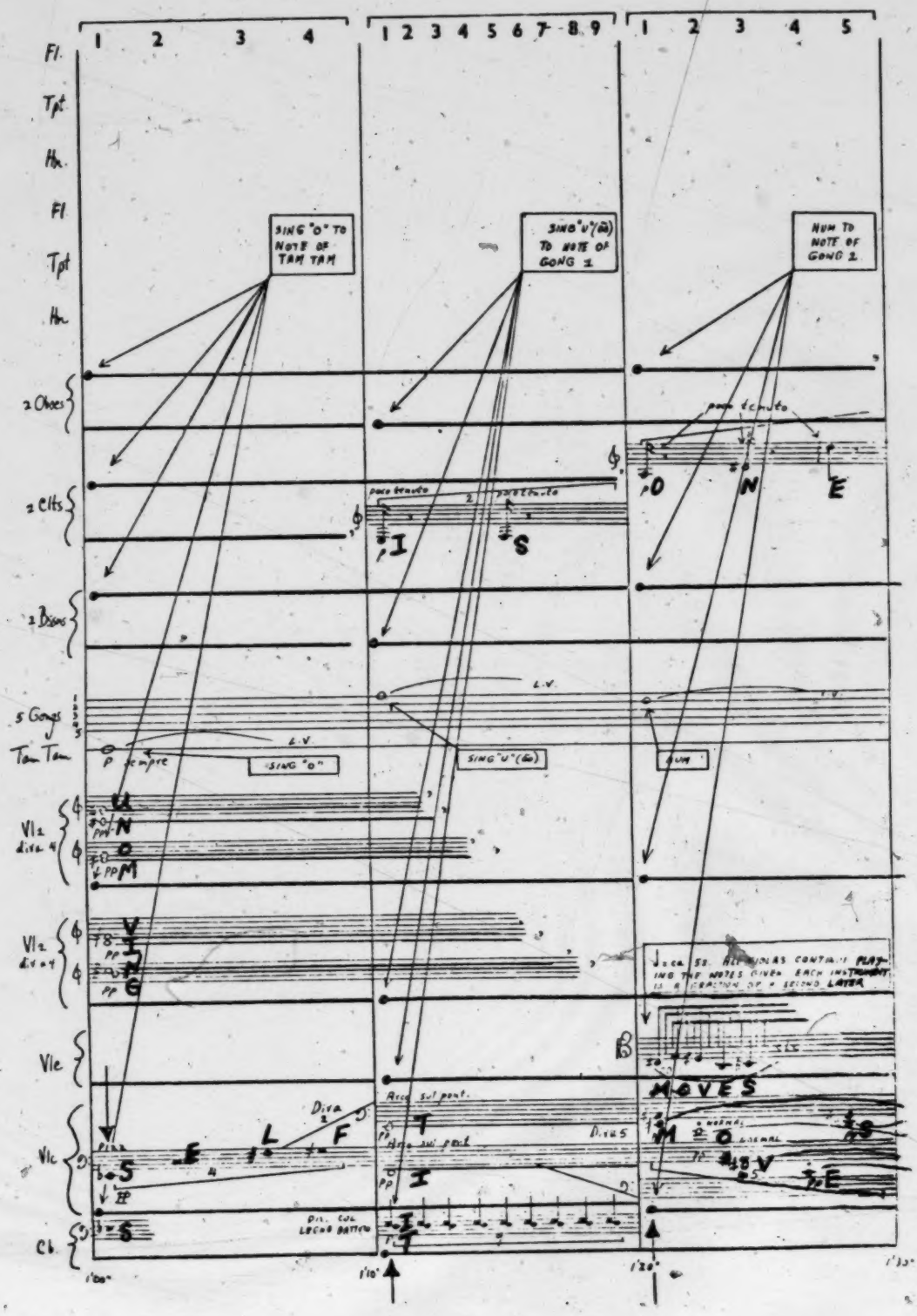
The pitches ascribed to the letters are as follows:



The total plan of the words between the gong punctuations is as follows:


(HORNS, TUTTI + FLUTES)
(HARMONIC SOUNDS)
(MELODIC SOUNDS)
UNMOVING IT MOVES FASTER THAN THE
SELF IS ONE UNMOVING IT MOVES
1'00"
2'00"
THE SELF ONE UNMOVING IT MOVES FASTER THAN THE MIND
MIND THE SENSES AND BUT SELF RUNS AHEAD UNMOVING IT OUTRUNS PURSUIT THE SELF
FASTER THAN THE MIND THE
3'00"
4'00"
IS THE SELF IS ONE THE SELF IS
EVERYWHERE WITHOUT BODY WITHOUT SHAPE WHOLE PURE WISE
SELF IS ONE UNMOVING IT MOVES FASTER THAN THE MIND
4'00"
5'00"
FASTER THAN THE MIND THE SELF
UNMOVING IT MOVES FAR AWAY, SELF-DEPENDING TRANSCENDING JET NEAR WITHIN ALL OUTSIDE ALL
THE SELF IS ONE UNMOVING IT MOVES
6'00"
7'00"
8'00"

Example 18. East, p. 3. Text and music, analysis.



expressed in the texts are reflected in the musical material. The text as an extramusical reference, then, is important for both its structure and its content. As was stated in Chapter four,[116] the extramusical reference is an artistic expression, and what Schafer is doing when he unites text and music is that he is uniting two art forms: the text that refers specifically to extramusical ideas, and the musical material that does not, on its own, refer specifically to extramusical ideas. The next form of extramusical reference to be discussed is theatrical effects, another technique that has attracted Schafer and that involves the combining of art forms.

Many of his works have been composed for music theatre. This not only reflects a personal preference, but also an international trend toward multimedia works and away from "pure" music as Reginald Smith Brindle explained:

> . . . the dynamics of recent musical evolution have led creative artists to consciously explore those performance elements which extend beyond the realm of 'pure music' and sound. These performance elements can be included in the category of 'theater,' and include dance (physical activity, human gesture, and movement of all sorts), staging (lighting, the juxtaposition and manipulation of stage properties), natural sounds (the artistic integration of stage-activity sounds and speech), and the spatial disposition of performance (the means of involvement and confrontation of the audience-spectator with the performance activities). 117

116 See p. 78.

117 Reginald Smith Brindle, The New Music, p. 147.

Because of the nature of music theatre as described above by Brindle, extramusical elements are an integral aspect of that medium and Schafer's works for music theatre do include much extramusical material in various forms. All of his works for music theatre, with the exception of Jonah, are large-scale productions involving elaborate staging effects and many performers. Apocalypsis, for example, is written for five hundred performers including sound poets, six choirs, dancers, mimes, and seven conductors, and torches and angel wings are included in the stage properties.

Schafer's intention is to create an art-form in which all of the arts are fused equally and most effectively:

> Ideally what I want is a kind of theatre in which all the arts may meet, court and make love. Love implies the sharing of experience; it should never mean the negation of personalities. This is the first task: to fashion a theatre in which all the arts are fused together, but without negating the strong and healthy character of each. 118

Thus music is intended to be treated as equal to all the other arts used in music theatre. An assessment of the degree to which Schafer accomplishes this goal, and the relation of extramusical ideas expressed in other art forms to the musical material, is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is only necessary to state that his theatrical works include much material which is non-musical in nature.

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118 R. Murray Schafer, "The Theatre of Confluence," Canada Music Book, Vol. 9 (Fall-Winter, 1974), p. 34.

The fact that since 1977 he has written over two thirds of his works for music theatre indicates that he is inclined toward writing music that has definite relationships with extramusical ideas.

Occasionally dramatic effects are found in works not otherwise intended as theatre pieces, and it is those instances that would most likely inspire critics to comment on extramusical references in the form of dramatic effects in Schafer's works. It does not occur often throughout his works, and when it does occur, the dramatic effect is not emphasized. One example is in Arcana, where Schafer writes: "This singer may wear an Egyptian mask, and coloured lights may be used." This dramatic effect is not obligatory, but rather at the discretion of the performer. Another instance occurs in String Quartet No. 2 (Waves) in which the players leave the stage one by one toward the end of the piece:

> Violin I stands up, turns and leaves the stage, continuing to play all the time. Nothing is to be rushed about this. The player moves out almost as if in a trance; the violin seems to be drawn by a mysterious force.

At the very end of the work, with the cellist alone on stage and the other instruments playing backstage, the following direction is given:

> The cellist puts down his bow, takes a spyglass and looks out slowly towards the side where the players have disappeared, then he pans slowly across the audience. This entire action must be very deliberately controlled. The spyglass must be produced and moved to the eye as if it were a visual extension of the peaceful melody receding; that is, it should be in very slow motion. Perhaps the last wave may be a ripple of laughter but the cellist must never play the effect for laughter.

According to Adams, Schafer has recently made this effect an optional one. Apparently the dramatic gesture was not effective in performance:

> Personally, I suspect this theatrical measure is out of keeping with an otherwise untheatrical atmosphere, and that the oceanography of the composition is not as literal as the effect attempts to make it. 119

These few occurrences do not indicate that this technique is characteristic of Schafer's writing. Dramatic effects are of course important in Schafer's many music theatre works, but in the remainder of his compositions, dramatic references to the extramusical world are minimal.

Another form of reference to extramusical ideas found in Schafer's scores are score directions. This also occurs occasionally and is not a factor in most of his compositions. He uses the directions to inspire a certain musical effect, as in Epitaph for Moonlight, where he writes: (Example 19).

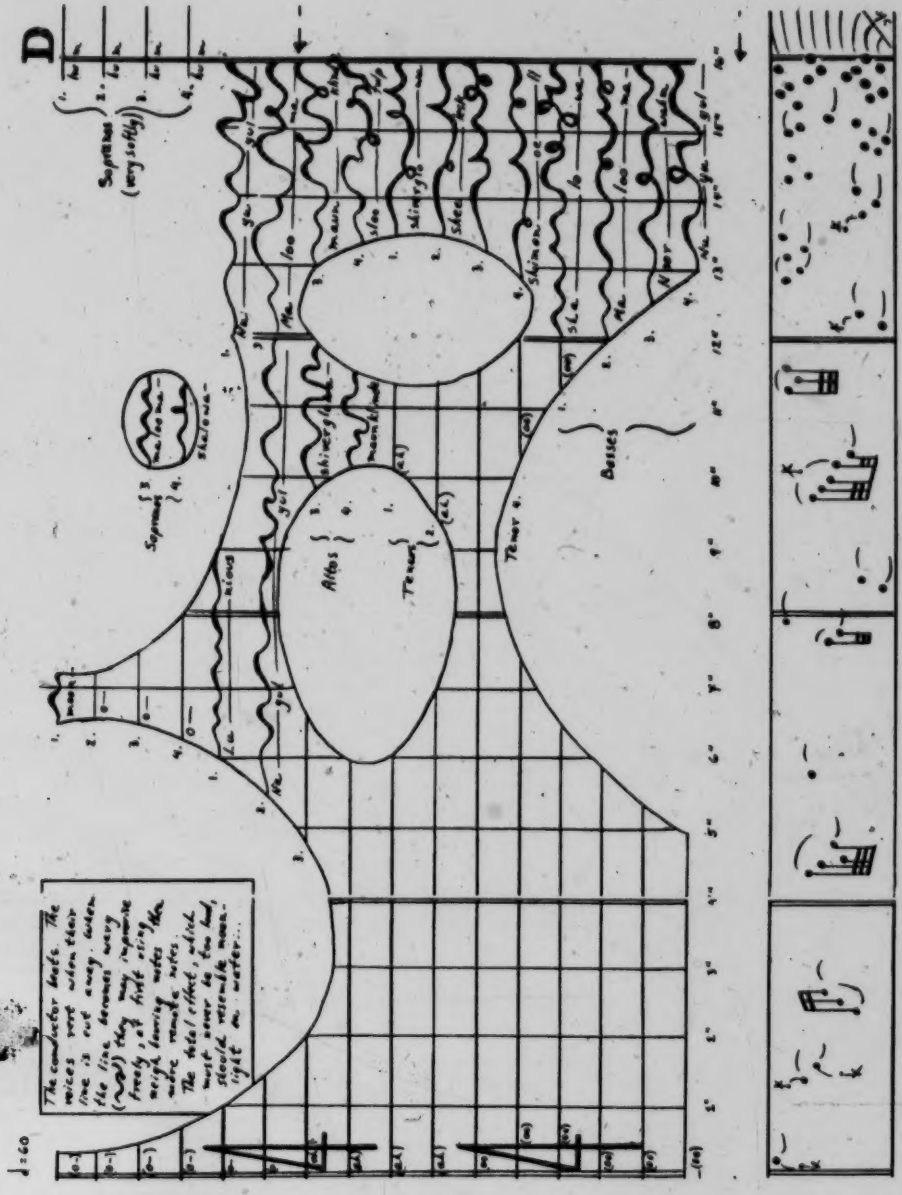
> The conductor beats. The voices rest when their line is cut away. When the line becomes wavy (~~~) they may improvise freely, at first using neighbouring notes. The total effect, which must never be too loud. should resemble moonlight on water.

This reference to "moonlight on water" is intended to inspire creative musical improvisation and the desired musical effect.

In Divan i Shams i Tabriz, he includes several directions in the score that relate to extramusical concepts. At the beginning of the work, for example, the following is written: "A

119 Adams, R. Murray Schafer, p. 135.

Example 19. Epitaph for Moonlight. Score directions relate to extramusical ideas.

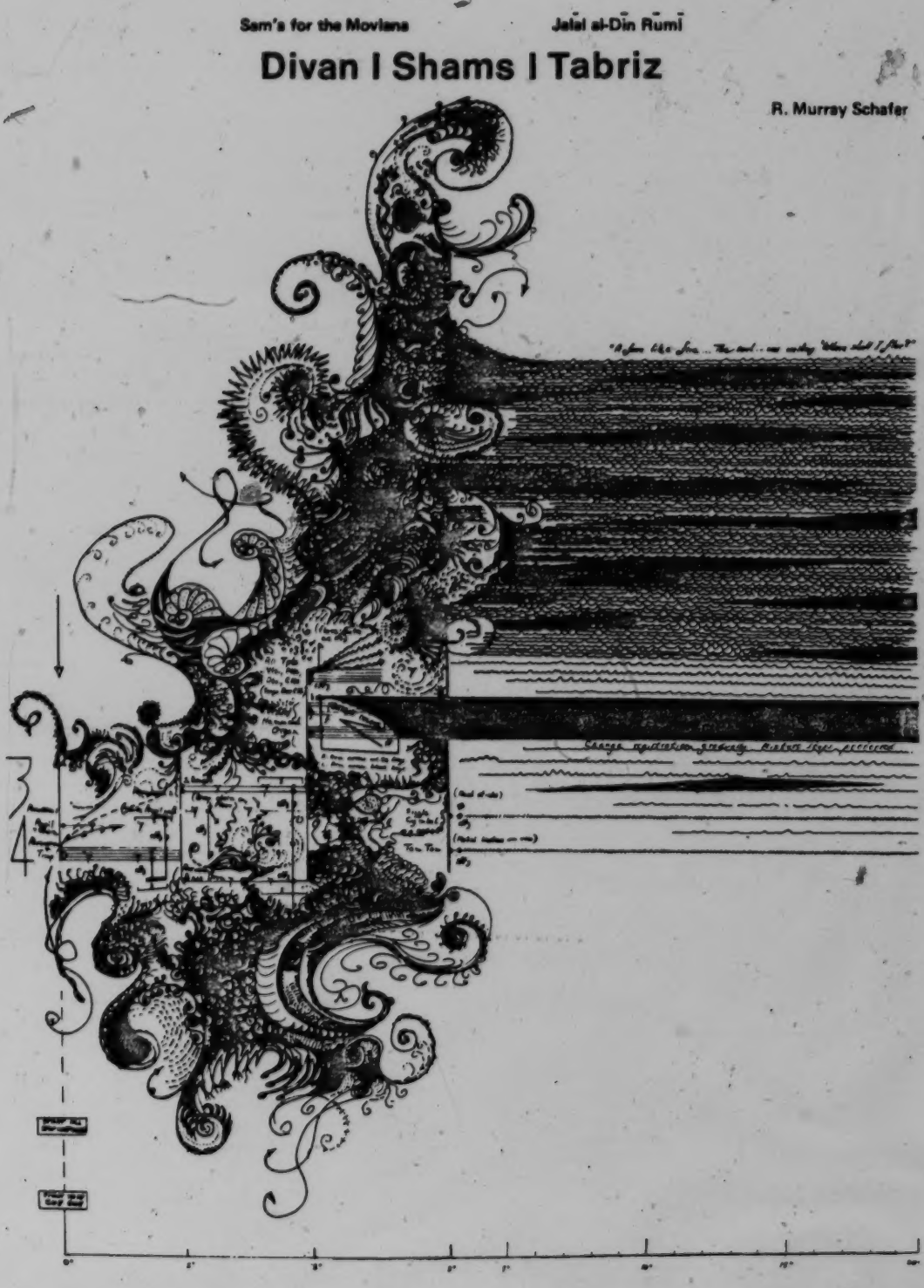

D
Sopranos (very softly)
Sopranos
Altos
Tenors
Basses
Tenor 4.
The conductor beats the notes just when their time is not easy. When the line becomes very (very) thin, very expressive freely, let him stop the note, the music notes. The violet, which must never be the last, should resemble moonlight on water.
♩=60

face like fire . . . . The soul . . . was wailing 'Where shall I flee?" These words give the performers, and the informed listeners, an idea of the interpretation desired by the composer. (Example 20.) Divan i Shams i Tabriz is the only work in which these references are used with any degree of consistency.

Visual references to the extramusical world are also less prominent than one might expect. Extensive use of visual artwork in his scores is restricted to his works for music theatre and Lustro. And within these, the artwork either represents possibilities for staging, or is abstract and therefore does not refer to anything recognizable in the extramusical world. There are few examples in which Schafer's scores visually evoke anything recognizable which is extramusical in nature.

Of the forms of extramusical reference discussed in this chapter, texts were described as having a significant influence on the musical material, and in the case of music theatre works, a rather complicated relation was described between the extramusical ideas and the music that stressed the equality of music with the other art forms. When reference is made to extramusical ideas in music, it is most likely that the reference is not to works with text nor to music theatre works or any of the other previously mentioned forms. It is likely that one is referring to instrumental or "absolute" works that have added linguistic references. This

Example 20. Divan i Shams i Tabriz. Score directions relate to extramusical ideas.



includes the rather large group of Schafer's instrumental works that have introductory program notes to be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Program Notes

Extramusical references in the form of program notes[120] are included in all of Schafer's instrumental works written after 1965: Son of Heldenleben, String Quartet No. 1, No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes, East, North/White, String Quartet No. 2 (Waves), Train, and Music for Wilderness Lake.[121]

The use of program notes is perhaps Schafer's most distinctive form of extramusical reference. Few contemporary composers have approached the composition of instrumental works with the use of extramusical references so consistently. Roger Scruton particularly named Schafer when he described "a revival of

120 Schafer does not identify all the introductory notes as "program notes" in the scores. For the purpose of this thesis "program note" refers to any prefatory explanation in the score that relates the work to an extramusical idea. For a description of the various meanings of the word "programme," see Roger Scruton, "Programme music," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 15, pp. 283-287; or for a more succinct definition and discussion of "program" see Jacques Barzun, "The Meaning of Meaning in Music," pp. 76-80.

121 Other instrumental works include Cortège, which is considered to be a music theatre work (see Adams, p. 135), and the two later works Situational Music for Brass and String Quartet No. 3, which were not available to the author.

programmatic or semi-programmatic devices" which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s:

> . . . but in the 1960s and 1970s some revival of programmatic or semi-programmatic devices could be noted, for example in the works of Maxwell Davies, Leeuw, Norby and Schafer. 122

Although Schafer's works are not programmatic in the same manner as Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique,[123] it is helpful to examine the manner in which music scholars have treated the relationship between the program and the music in that well-known example, as an indication of how one might view the relationship in Schafer's works. Jacques Barzun, in his book Berlioz and the Romantic Century, made the claim that the program in the Symphonie Fantastique was superfluous to the musical material of the work. He "relegated the program to the role of promotional aid and found the symphony intelligible as music and enjoyable in spite of certain defects . . . ."[124] In his article of 1970, "The Symphonie Fantastique and its Program," Nicholas Temperley argued against Barzun's claim, stating that Barzun's statement indicated a "strong emotional bias against the Program."[125] Temperley argued that the program offered another level of understanding

122 Roger Scruton, "Programme music," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 15, p. 286.

123 Schafer's program notes might be labelled "semi-programmatic devices," according to Roger Scruton's description.

124 Jacques Barzun, Berlioz and the Romantic Century, Vol. 1, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 162.

125 Nicholas Temperley, "The Symphonie Fantastique and its Program," Musical Quarterly, Vol. 57 no. 4, p. 593.

to the work, and that "a great deal about it (the Symphonie Fantastique) can be fully understood only by reference to the Program."[126] The question of whether the music is satisfying independently of the program is not important he states:

> "The symphony offers . . . enough musical interest in itself," says Berlioz; therefore, runs the third argument, the Program is a sham, necessary perhaps to satisfy the perverted sensibilities of 1830 but for us an embarrassing excrescence, interfering with the purity of our musical appreciation. This is perhaps the most irresponsible position of all. We need not enter into the question of whether, when music is allied to action, words, or ideas, the music must be independently satisfying to make a successful whole. We may concede for argument that this is the case. It still does not follow that the perception of the music is equivalent to the perception of the whole. The music of songs in a foreign language, for instance, may be intimately known and admired without understanding the words; but to understand the words adds another level to the work of art, including the music. So much is obvious, but it has not always been present to the minds of writers on program music. Even though Berlioz, late in his life, conceded that the music might be enjoyed on its own, there is still a great deal about it that can be fully understood only by reference to the Program. 127

Barzun responded to Temperley's argument by admitting to his error, and by acknowledging the validity of studying the work in relation to its program:

> Therefore the contention I have always made that the master's music was no more and no less tied than any other composer's to something outside itself is an error -- and a serious one. I ought to be satisfied now that Berlioz's musical powers are recognized as great, side by side with his attachment to various "programs" that it behooves us to study and remember. 128

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126 Nicholas Temperley, "The Symphonie Fantastique and its Program," pp. 595-596.

127 Ibid.

128 Jacques Barzun, "The Meaning of Meaning in Music," p. 76.

Since the scholars seem to have agreed on the importance and validity of studying Berlioz' extramusical references that are programs, it seems appropriate that Schafer's programs also be examined. The remainder of this chapter examines the relationship of the extramusical reference to the musical material in two of Schafer's instrumental works: North/White and No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes.[129]

North/White is a nine-minute work for orchestra, prefaced by a brief but informative program note that describes the destruction of Canada's northern environment by the effects of industrialization. (Example 21). The inspiration of the work is named as an event, the rape of the Canadian north, and the music depicts that event. The composer's attitude toward the event, according to the tone of the note, is one of anger and severity and the music also depicts that attitude. Two "characters" who take part in the event are also mentioned in the note: the snowmobile is the "implement of destruction" and the Canadian north is the victim, described by Schafer as "austere," "spacious," "lonely," "pure," "temptationless," "awe-inspiring," "mysterious," and "splendid." These characters and the conflict between them are also depicted in the music. The following section describes the music and how it relates to the ideas presented in the program.

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129 These two compositions were chosen because of the contrast exemplified in the relationship of their extramusical references to their musical material.

Example 21. North/White. Program note.

Programme Note

I call this piece NORTH/WHITE because, like white light, which is composed of all visible frequencies, it combines all the producible notes of the symphony orchestra from the deepest to the highest instruments.
The North is not described by the adjective 'pretty' and neither is this piece. NORTH/WHITE is inspired by the rape of the Canadian North. This rape is being carried out by the nation's government in conspiracy with business and industry. The instruments of destruction are pipelines and airstrips, highways and snowmobiles.
But more than the environment is being destroyed by these actions, for, just as the moon excursions destroyed the mythogenic power of the moon (it ceased to be poetry and became property) Canadians are about to be deprived of the 'idea of the North', which is at the core of the Canadian identity. The North is a place of austerity, of spaciousness and loneliness; the North is pure; the North is temptationless. These qualities are forged into the mind of the Northerner; his temperament is synonymous with them.
There are few true Canadians and they are not to be found in cities. They do not sweat in discotheques, eat barbecued meat-balls or watch late movies on television. They do not live in high-rise apartments, preferring a clean space to neighbours' spaghetti.
But these few remainders from an authentic time are apparently to be sacrificed and the North, like the South and the West and the East is to be broken by men and machines. That, at least, is the design which the little technocrats of progress have planned. They seek not only to civilize the North but to civilize the imagination of the North. They do not realize that when they chop into the North they chop up the integrity of their own minds, blocking the awe-inspiring mysteries with gas stations and reducing their legends to plastic dolls.
The idea of North is a Canadian myth.
Without a myth a nation dies.
This piece is dedicated to the splendid and indestructible idea of North.

A large orchestra is required for the performance of North/White. It is scored for four each of winds, six horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, harp, piano, and a large string section (twenty-two first violins). The subject is grand and the statement is strong, according to the program note, and therefore a large orchestra is suitable. The destructive forces of industrialization, cacophonous and overpowering, are evoked by a large percussion section that includes: three Metal Blocks (Anvils), high, medium and low; Small Triangle; Large Chin; Tam-Tam;

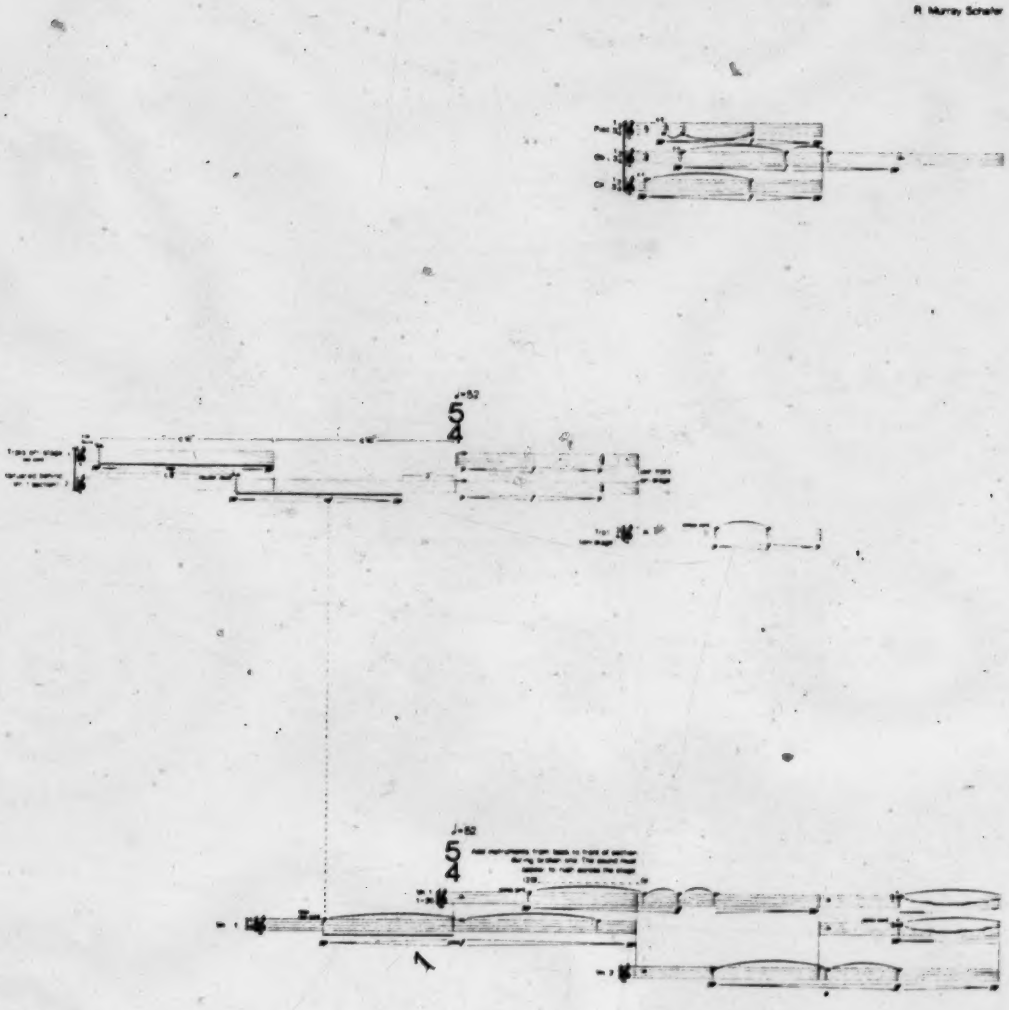
Bass Drum; Timpani; two Wood Blocks, high and low; Snare Drum; two Metal Drums (e.g. oil cans with good resonance), high and low; two Suspended Metal Sheets, one tin (with a dull sound) and one steel (with a bright sound); four Suspended Metal Pipes (different lengths to produce different pitches), clear sound; Corrugated Metal Surface; three large sheets of Masonite or thick cardboard (to produce deep flapping effect when bent back and forth); two or three lengths of rubber hose to produce soft whirring sound when spun (no flapping sound); Snowmobile. Several of these percussion instruments are capable of producing the ugliest sounds of industrialization, and this ugliness reflects the composer's attitude, as expressed in the program note, toward the industrialization of the North. The addition of the snowmobile is significant in relation to the program, where it was named as the "implement of destruction," and since the sound of the snowmobile is one of the most aggressive, unpleasant, overbearing sounds that one would hear in the North, it is suitably used to articulate the climax of the composition. Not only does the size of the orchestra reflect a large subject, but Schafer also includes in the work all the producible notes of the symphony orchestra, from the deepest to the highest, another indication of a statement that is all-encompassing and expansive.

Just as the program describes two contrasting, conflicting ideas (the northern environment and the threat, industrialization),

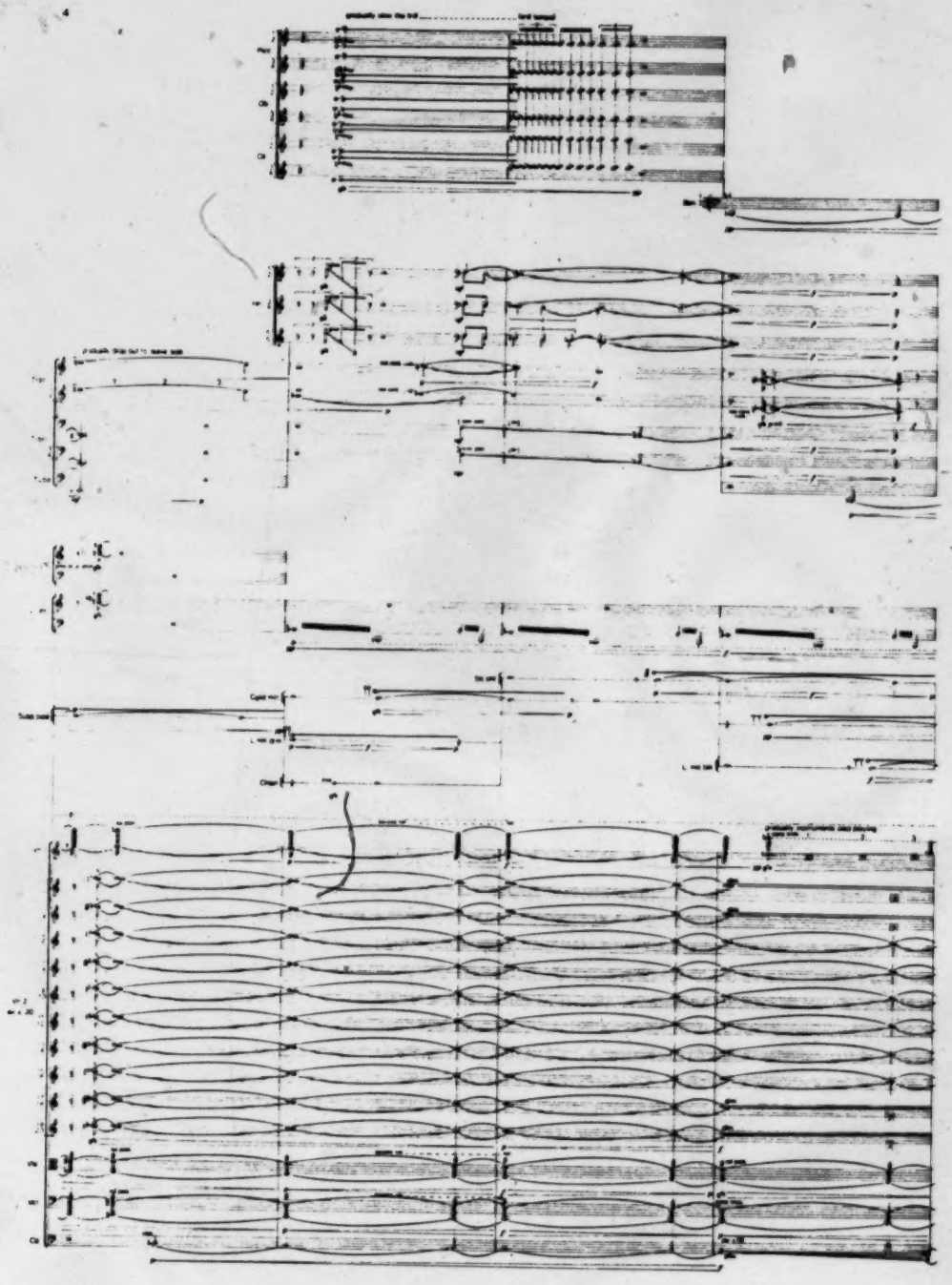
so the musical material of North/White is based on the juxtaposition of two contrasting, conflicting, ideas. The first musical idea is melodic, sustained rhythmically, based on the interval of a fourth, and soloistic in texture. It might be described as austere, spacious, lonely, pure, or mysterious, the words used by Schafer to describe the northern environment in the program note. This is the "A" idea that begins the work and that seems to represent musically the northern environment. The work begins with off-stage trumpets joined by violins sustaining the note Bb, then F is played and sustained by different instruments. The sustained notes get gradually louder then softer, creating the feeling of distance, suggesting the expanse of the north. (Example 22.) The "E plus quarter-tone" in the second violin provides the dissonance that introduces the second or "B" idea. This contrasting B idea is primarily a texture, based on dissonant harmonies of minor second clusters. Percussion instruments colour the texture with sforzandos and trills that gradually get louder, then softer, and it has a frenzied, erratic rhythm. This musical effect might be described as destructive, ominous, ugly, and threatening, and seems to represent musically the threat of industrialization described in the program. (Example 23.)

A description of the structure of the work will show how Schafer depicts the "rape of the Canadian north," by juxtaposing these two ideas. The piece develops toward one climax that

Example 22. North/White, p. 1. The "A" idea at the beginning of the work.



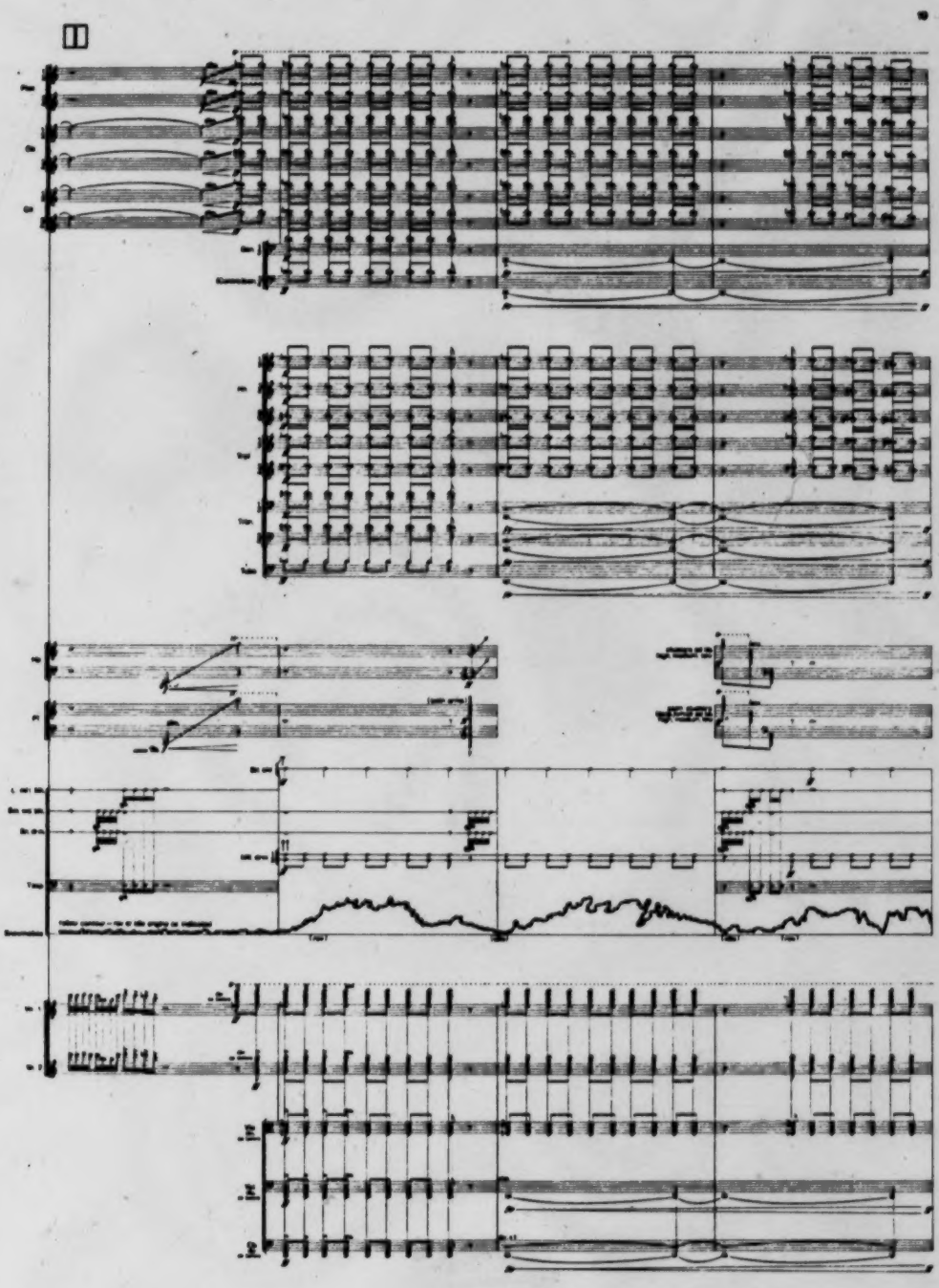
Example 23. North/White, p. 4. The "B" idea.



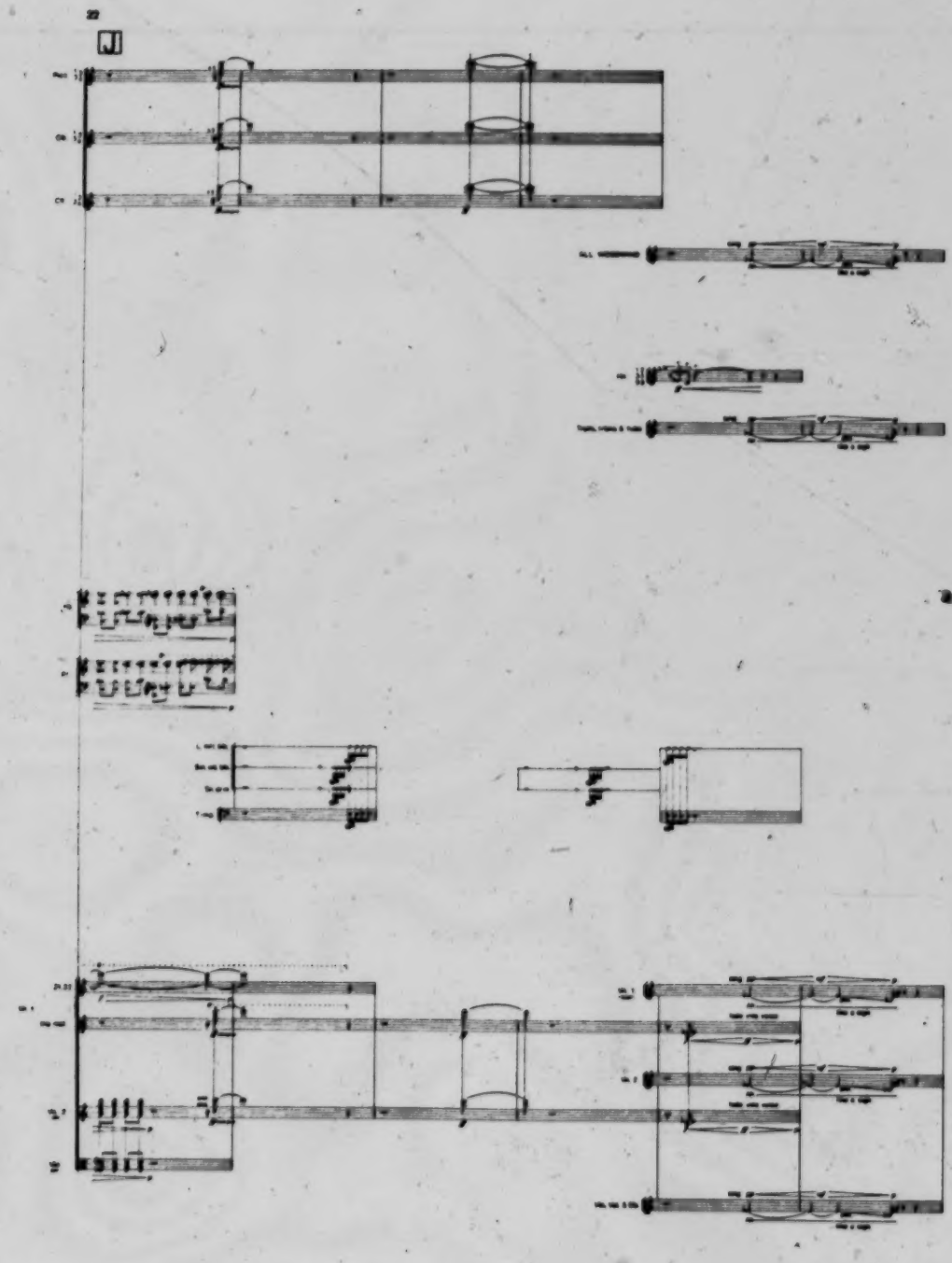
occurs at I in which the second or B idea is stated in a militant, constant rhythm for the first time in the work. (Example 24.) Dissonant chords are repeated fortissimo by the entire orchestra in steady eighth-notes of varying numbers, increasing to a maximum of nineteen consecutive repeated chords, beginning and ending with groups of nine. The groups are separated by a "sffz" rhythmic figure repeated by the small wood block, snare drum, large metal block and timpani, with clusters played on the harp and piano. The revving of the snowmobile engine adds to the dissonance of the repeated chords, and its roaring sound can just be heard over the pounding chords. This climax suitably depicts the event referred to in the program because of the insistent, aggressive rhythm; the dissonance; the massive sound produced; the revving snowmobile engine; and the relentless repetition. The work ends shortly after the climax, with a brief return of the A idea as if to represent the indestructible quality of the north as Schafer describes it in the program (Example 25.) Here the Eb to Bb interval of the A idea is sung to "Ah" by the orchestra players. This is the retrograde inversion of the first statement of the A idea that opened the work, the Bb to F interval.

Balancing this climactic section based on the B idea, is a preceding section in which the A idea predominates. The woodwind and brass players softly whistle the sustained A melody, now expanded to its fullest statement, in unison. (Example 26.)

Example 24. North/White, p. 19. The climax, based on "B" idea.



Example 25. North/White, p. 22. Return of "A" idea at ending.

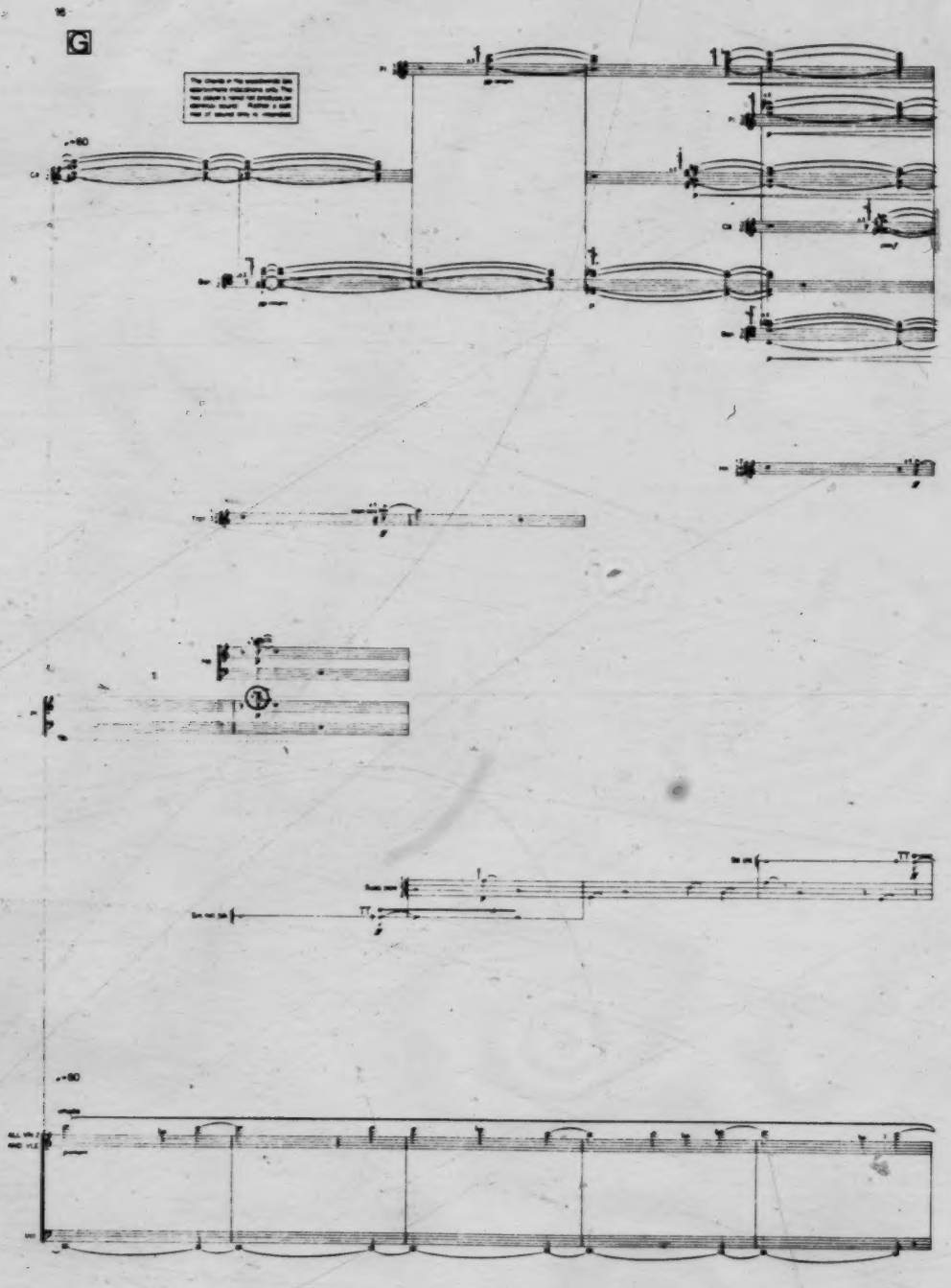


Example 26. North/White. "A" idea expanded.

It is repeated with a subtle rhythmic variation by all violins and viola players. (Example 27.) The melody circles around the E natural, which represents the transition between the beginning Bb to F statement, and the ending Eb to Bb statement of the A idea. Interpolations of clusters and percussive effects perpetuate the everpresent B idea that eventually erupts at I . This middle section that includes the long statement of the A idea, then the long statement of the B idea, between F and J , makes up almost half of the work.

The beginning section presents the two opposing ideas, combining them in different manners. The A idea is gradually expanded from its beginning two-note motive, and the B idea gradually becomes more prominent. After the opening five-measure statement of A, the B idea is suddenly presented at A , where

Example 27. North/White. "A" idea expanded with rhythmic variation.

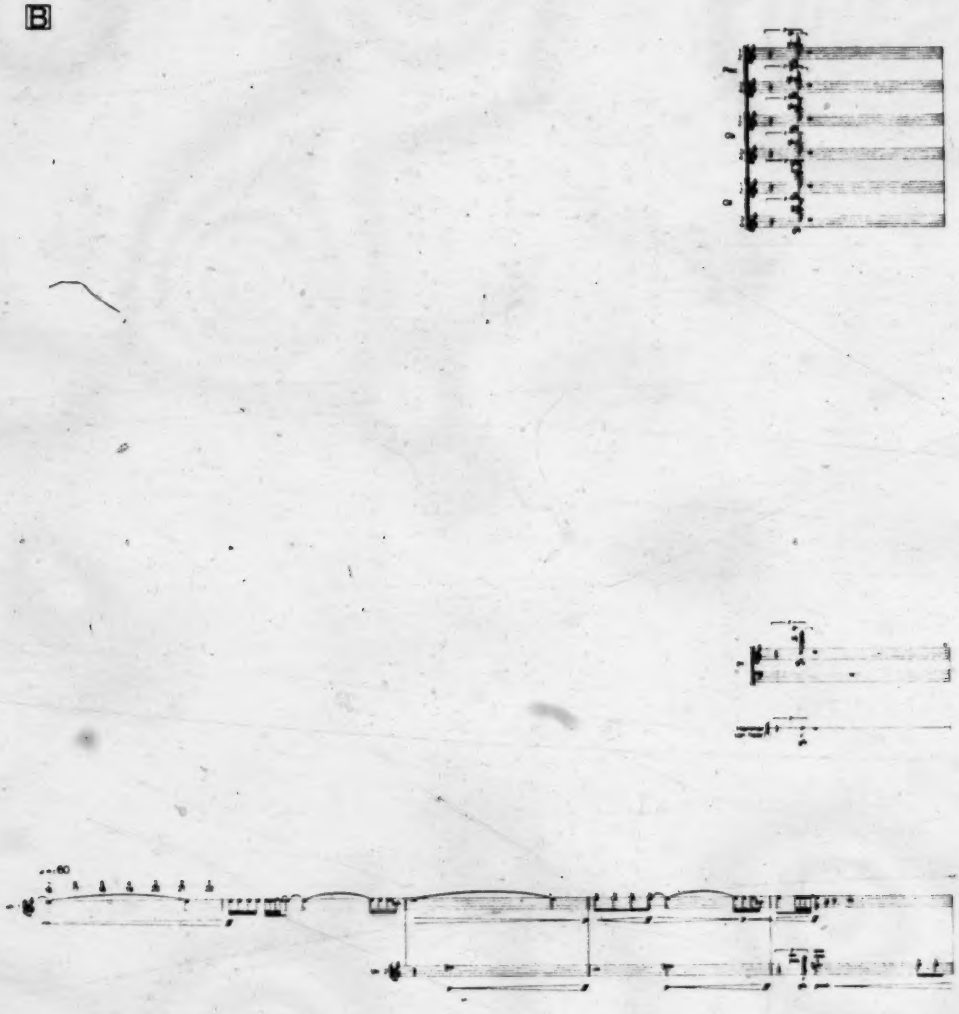


a sustained semitone cluster is played tutti. The A idea returns at B , now with E as its main note and the perfect interval replaced by a tritone, the E to Bb. (Example 28.) It is played by a solo violin, and has a more agitated rhythm, no longer containing only sustained notes. At C plus one measure the B idea returns, continuing with brief interpolations of the A idea to F , where the long statement of the previously described A idea precedes the climax of the work.

Thus the structure of the work is based on the juxtaposition of two opposing, contrasting ideas. And from the program note, it is known that the contrast and conflict portrayed in the music represents the struggle of the northern Canadian environment against the onslaught of industrialization. The sounds chosen by Schafer clearly and effectively evoke these ideas. In the climax, threatening and aggressive, one can interpret Schafer's ominous, pessimistic tone, as he depicts the "rape of the Canadian north."

The methods by which the composer achieves unity and diversity in the work can be analyzed without reference to extramusical association. It can be observed from the description that the musical materials are structured and organized in the context of its autonomous musical materials. But the extramusical reference gives another level of understanding, another context through which the work achieves meaning. North/White is a carefully and imaginatively composed work, and much of the musical

Example 28. North/White, p. 6. The A idea, the fourth augmented to a tritone.



material can be described in terms of the program note, written by the composer as an introduction to the work.

Another work for orchestra that has interesting extramusical associations expressed in an introductory program note is No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes. This work by itself, without the explanatory program note, would be difficult to understand. But with the aid of the note, it becomes a somewhat radical and daring protest against restrictions placed on Canadian composers by symphony managers, and the unusual form and content of the musical material is understandable in that context. The program note is given in full in Example 29.

Example 29. No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes. Program note.

PROGRAM NOTE:

The influences in this piece are various and they may as well be recorded. First, there was the TSO contract, a phrase of which gave the piece its title, and the general tone of which did much to inspire the composer. Then there was that memorable supper in Ottawa with the conductor Victor Feldbrill - casier à homard and dry Chablis - where certain logistical problems were discussed, then evaporated as the evening wore on.

Next, turning to more serious points, there was the influence of my friend Ken Barron, of the Vancouver firm of Barron and Strachan, Acoustical Engineers. Ken and I have worked together a good deal in confronting matters of noise pollution over the past couple of years. One day we made a recording of some traffic noise in front of the Vancouver Hotel and Ken did a spectrum analysis of the sound, producing innumerable charts with curvy lines showing the sound intensity of the various band-widths of the sound. These graphs were studied intensively throughout the composition of this work and no doubt they helped provide various sonorous felicities.

Then there is my friend Eugene Rittich, first horn player in the TSO - to whom the work is dedicated - who once worked out for me a quarter-tone fingering system for the horn. With Eugene I discussed numerous preliminary ideas, and the quiet middle section of the piece is certainly his.

Next there is my friend the artist Iain Baxter, who, not knowing much about music, has for a long while tried to persuade me to write an "extension" to Beethoven's Fifth, that composition always having seemed to Baxter to be rather boring. To Iain I owe the idea of blurring the edges of a work of art, perhaps even the arrogance of trying to improve or at any rate infect another's art-work.

And finally there is my other friend "mouche", but that is perhaps a story for another time....

Schafer offers several references to the extramusical world in the note, particularly in the first paragraph, where he explains the title and the general tone of the work, relating them to a TSO (Toronto Symphony Orchestra) contract, and a memorable supper in Ottawa. The "tone" of the work is perhaps its most important element.

His tone in the program note is subtly sarcastic.[130] The words "turning to more serious points," suggest a tongue in cheek attitude in the first paragraph; his description of the "casier à homard and dry Chablis" suggests a mocking tone; and "the arrogance of trying to improve or at any rate infect another's art-work," suggests an intention to be perhaps somewhat radical or outrageous. Other notes in the score confirm Schafer's tone and indicate that the work is a protest against the TSO contract that very explicitly (so explicitly that the number ten was repeated numerically in brackets) stated that the work be "no longer than ten (10) minutes" in duration. He wrote near the end of the work:

> It may be that by this point the piece will have exceeded ten minutes in duration. This is merely an illusion. Actually we have now arrived at the "interval." The audience may now eat their jelly beans. Soon the piano movers will arrive to push the piano into position for the Brahms concerto.

The tone is unequivocally sarcastic, even disrespectful. He notates the conductor arriving and leaving by marking footsteps

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130 One can appreciate this more if familiar with Schafer's personality, specifically his sense of humour.

in the score. (Example 30.)

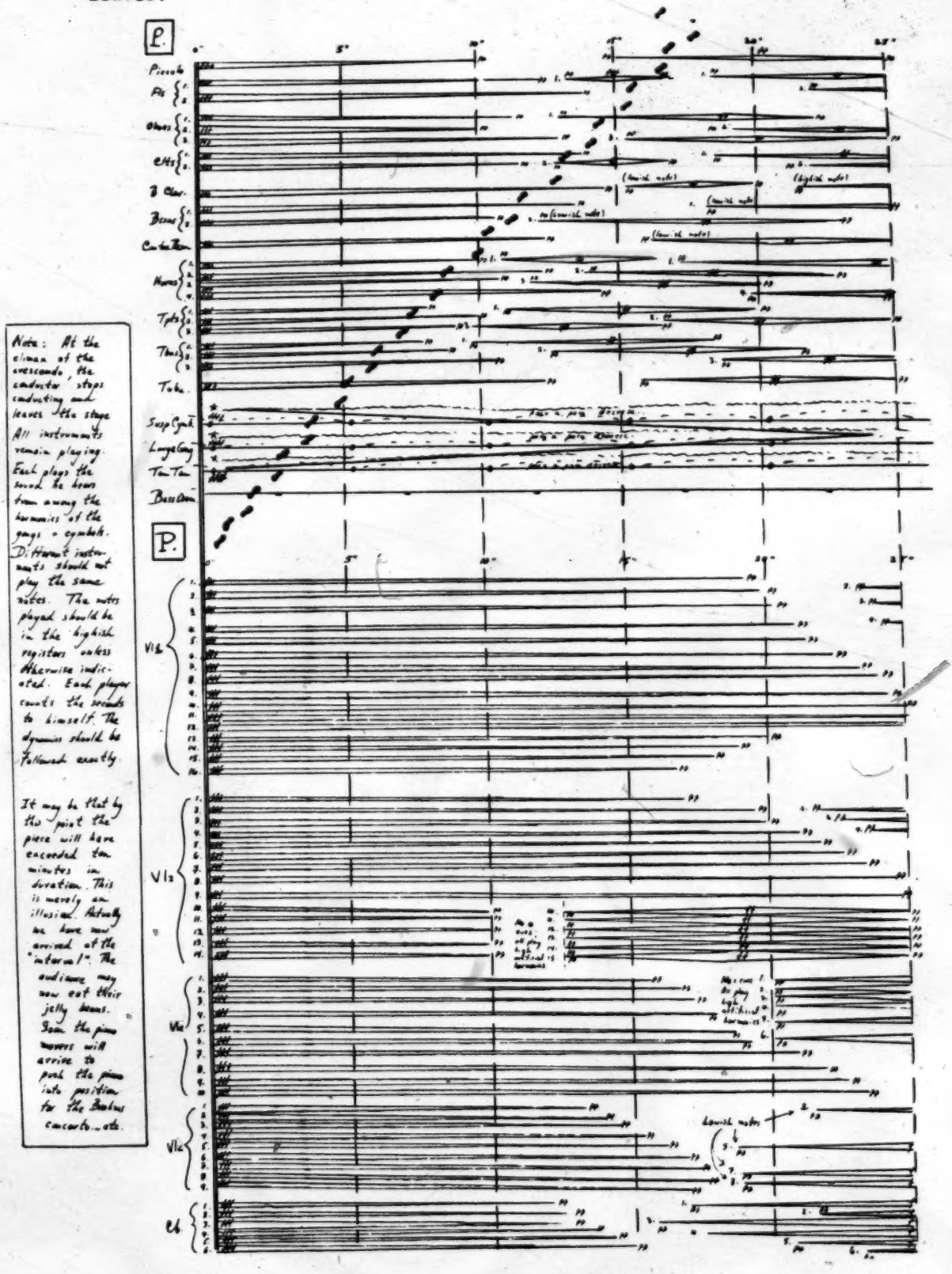
He also adds some restrictions of his own: "No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes must be either the first piece on the program, or the first piece after the Interval"; "the composer expressly forbids the performance of this piece unless all the directions are followed." That he expects the work will not be appreciated, is indicated by his provision for an ending "if there is applause," and also one for "if there is no applause." So the introductory program note indicates a sarcastic protest against a TSO contract that specifically indicated the required length of the work, and gives a forewarning of "arrogance" on the part of the composer. How is Schafer's reaction to this extramusical idea (the contract), as expressed in the extramusical reference (the program note), depicted in the music?

Certainly the most unusual aspect of the work is that it has no definite length, and is inevitably longer than ten minutes. The audience helps to determine the length of the work, since clapping (if there is any) is the cue for a long crescendo and decrescendo played by the percussion:

> After the fadeout of the percussion, a few winds and strings continue with soft waves of sounds as before, gradually diminishing. If there is applause the percussion is to begin another long crescendo and diminuendo. This is repeated each time the applause rises up, though each time with less duration and intensity (presumably like the applause).

The composition ends at the downbeat of the next work on the program, a string quartet sustaining the dominant seventh chord

Example 30. No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes, p. 25. Conductor leaves.


Note: At the climax of the crescendo, the conductor stops conducting and leaves the stage. All instruments remain playing. Each plays the sound he hears from among the harmonics of the gongs & cymbals. Different instruments should not play the same notes. The notes played should be in the highish registers unless otherwise indicated. Each player counts the seconds to himself. The dynamics should be followed exactly.
It may be that by this point the piece will have exceeded ten minutes in duration. This is merely an illusion. Actually we have now arrived at the "interval". The audience may now eat their jelly beans. Soon the piano movers will arrive to push the piano into position for the Brahms concerto, etc.
F.
P.
Piccolo
Fls
Obes
Cl's
B Clar.
Bassn
Cont. Bsn
Horns
Tpts
Trbs
Tba.
Susp Cym.
Large Gong
Tam-Tam
Bass Drum
Vlns
Vlas
Vcs
Db
Lowest notes

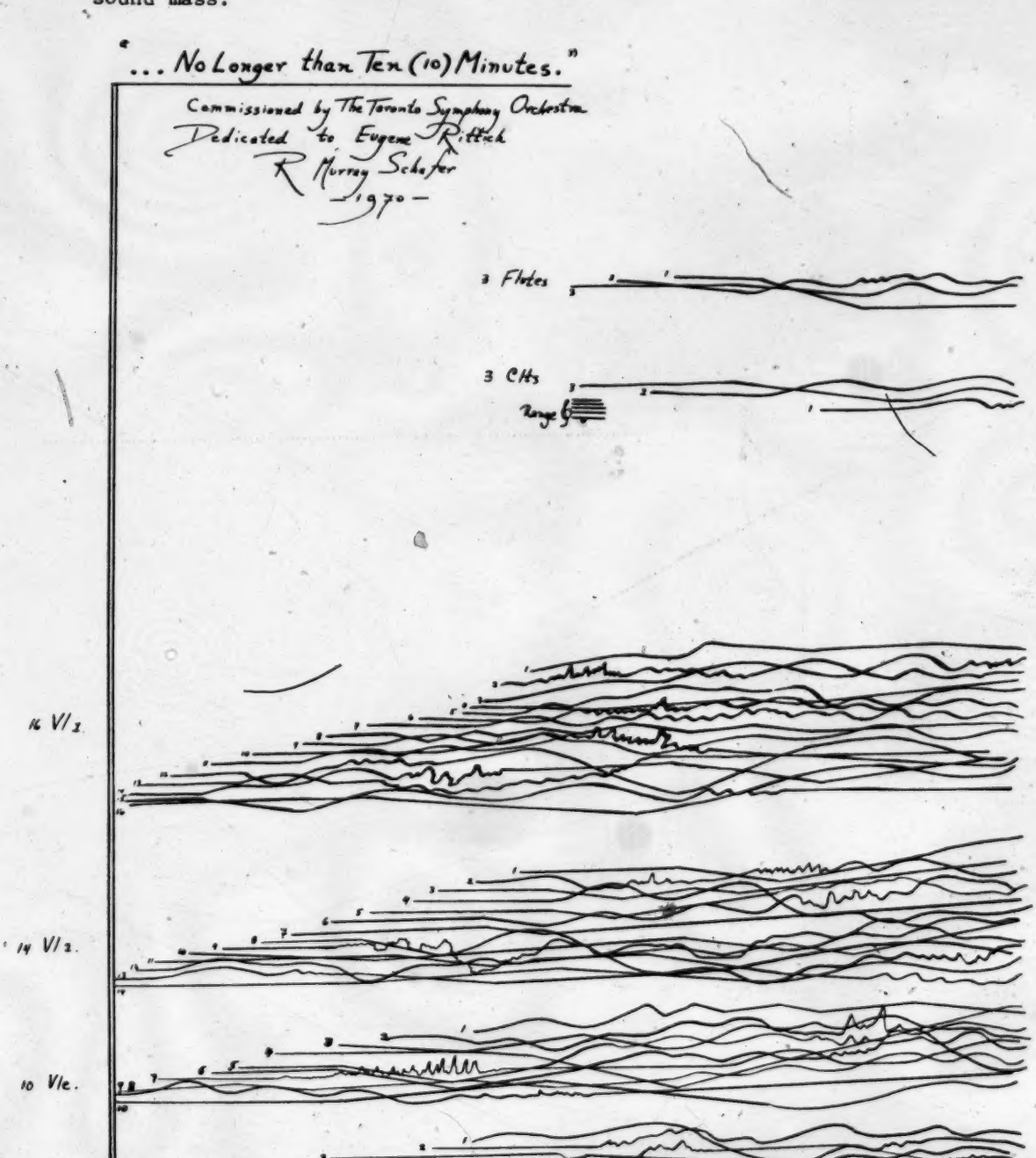
of the next piece until its beginning. No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes begins "unnoticed, gradually out of the tune-ups." The conductor enters after the beginning and leaves before the end. Both the beginning and ending sections of the work are made up of indeterminant sound masses. (Examples 31 and 32.) The middle section (H to K), however, is framed by silence with a well-defined texture of solo horn and orchestral accompaniment. (Example 33.)

Thus Schafer has defied the TSO contract not by simply making the work longer than ten minutes, but by making the work begin and end indistinctly, so that it is difficult to say exactly how long the work will be. Furthermore, the audience determines the length of the work to a great extent. This is one of Schafer's most "avant-garde" scores in its use of sound mass, indeterminacy, quarter-tones, tone clusters, and special instrumental effects. This style, unfamiliar to most audiences, is likely to cause displeasure, another way in which Schafer expressed his disdain for the entire contract system.[131]

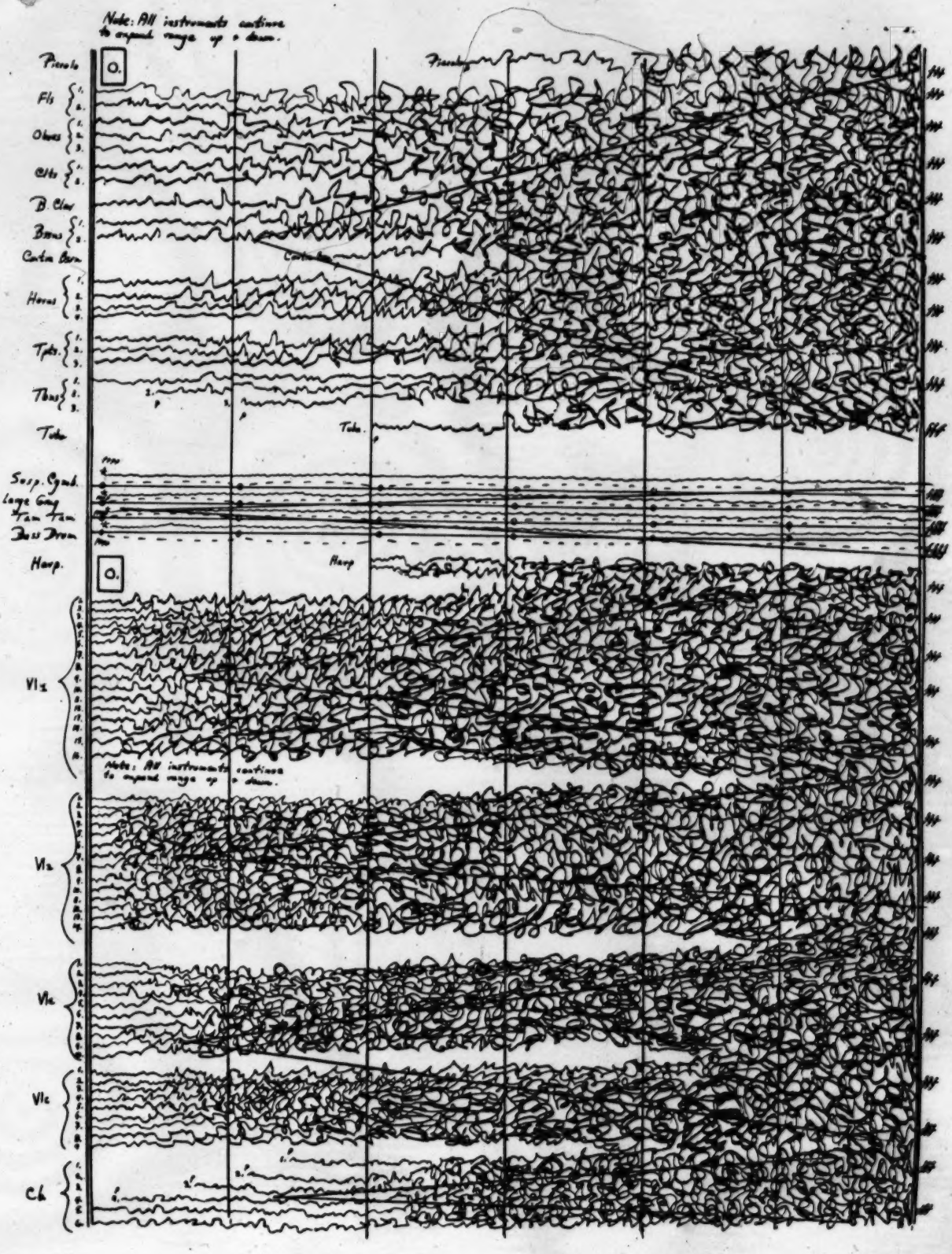
Thus one can understand the style and the structure of No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes in terms of Schafer's protest

131 The contract system, as it works in Canada, is idiosyncratic. The Canadian government encourages performance groups to perform Canadian works by financial remuneration. At the same time it provides Canadian composers with grants to write works for Canadian groups. The survival of the performance groups, as their managers generally agree, depends on presenting music that has wide audience appeal, which, generally speaking, Canadian works do not have. Hence the problem: should the managers present Canadian works, for which they are remunerated, but which the audience will not usually appreciate, or not?

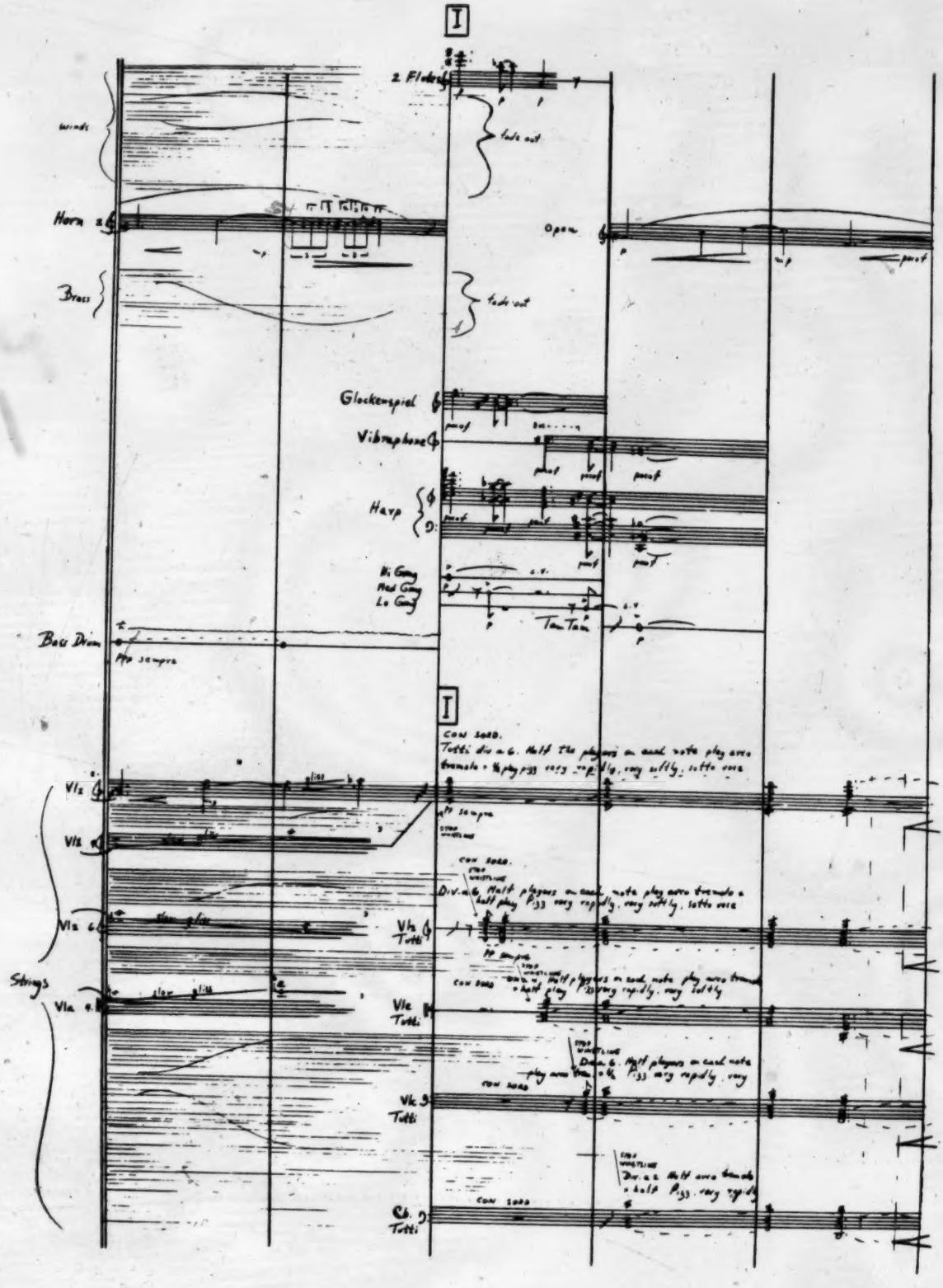
Example 31. No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes, p. 1. Beginning sound mass.



Example 32. No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes, p. 24. Ending sound mass.



Example 33. No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes, p. 13. Middle Section. Horn solo.



against the Toronto Symphony Orchestra manager's contract. It can also be analyzed in terms of its musical materials, as a kind of ABA form in which the B section is the most important part of the work, with the beginning and ending sections providing a blurred and indistinct framework.

His other instrumental works each have a distinctive extra-musical idea, expressed in a program note, and that extramusical idea is related to the musical material in an original and interesting manner that could also be described and analyzed. To ignore the extramusical idea when analyzing the music would be to ignore something that is explicitly stated by the composer and intended to be related to the work. As Michael Kennedy said about neglecting the autobiographical element in Mahler's music, so it is with the extramusical idea (autobiographical to a degree) in Schafer's instrumental music:

> His music lends itself easily to extra-musical analysis, indeed it is among the most autobiographical music ever written, and to pretend that it exists only in terms of musical procedures is to miss an element which Mahler explicitly commanded us to take into account 132

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132 Michael Kennedy, Mahler (London: Dent, 1974), p. 76.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

The three quotations cited in the Introduction that identified extramusical ideas in Schafer's works are now more meaningful. In the first, written in a dictionary of contemporary composers, Udo Kasemets wrote:

> It becomes immediately evident that much of his source material is of extramusical origin. 133

Schafer does include extramusical references in most of his scores, and he said that the extramusical idea often took precedence when he was first writing a work, before "the notes take over." The sources were described in Chapter four in five groups according to subject, and it was shown that the extramusical ideas were not only interesting and thought-provoking, but were artistic expressions in themselves, rooted in twentieth-century trends.

His interest in a variety of topics, notably those outside of music, was described in his biography, and he himself stated that his works were more closely related to extramusical ideas than other composers because of his interest in and awareness

133 See p. 1.

of many things outside of music. He did not hesitate to include the references to the extramusical ideas on which the works were based because he, like many others, was not inclined to debate the question of absolute versus non-absolute music, feeling the question was not relevant.

Six techniques of extramusical reference were shown to exist in his scores, and acted as clues to the performer and to the informed listener as to the ideas behind the works. Most of his compositions have descriptive titles, and some have score directions that relate to extramusical ideas. He has written many works for music theatre that include much extramusical material, and he has been especially drawn toward that medium. Most of his works include texts and all of his instrumental works have program notes. These techniques help to make it "immediately evident," as Kasemets wrote,"that much of his source material is of extra-musical origin."

The second quotation cited in the Introduction was written by a critic in Winnipeg and it stated:

> There can be little doubt as to the extraordinary imagination of R. Murray Schafer, and his rare ability to organize musical and extramusical forces. 134

Many examples were given to illustrate Schafer's skill as a composer in relating the extramusical idea to the musical fabric

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134 See p. 2.

of a composition. He is continually experimenting with the union of text and music, an area that has interested him throughout his career and one in which he has had notable success. In Requiems for the Party Girl, a two-sentence text was set with painstaking detail in its relation to the music. East, an orchestral work, was shown to be largely based on a forty-eight word meditative text from the Hindu Isha-Upanishad. Two orchestral works illustrated the relation of the extramusical ideas in program notes to the musical material: North/White, in which the music, like the program, was based on two contrasting ideas -- the A and B ideas that represented the northern environment and industrialiaztion, respectively; and No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes, in which the form of the work, with an indistinct beginning and ending, and its avant-garde techniques, reflected the composer's protest against the contract that asked him to write a work that was "no longer than ten (10) minutes" in length.

The last quotation cited in the Introduction recently appeared in Music and Letters in a review of three of Schafer's works. David Roberts wrote:

> The impression of Schafer the artist produced by these scores is that his main creative talent lies in his ability to devise strong and evocative frameworks of extra-musical association for his compositions. . . ." 135

135 See p. 2.

Roberts goes on to state that Schafer's music offered little more than what was stated in the preceding quotation. The examples in this thesis have shown that the musical materials in Schafer's works, often related to an extramusical idea, are highly structured and organized. Perhaps Roberts missed something. In Chapter three it was shown that extramusical ideas contribute to two qualities of Schafer's music, namely, its capacity for surprise, and its audience-appeal. From his writings, it was clear that Schafer admired the unusual, or the radical, or the surprising elements of an artwork, and it was also clear that he was concerned that his music be understood and appreciated by an audience, and extramusical references do contribute to his achievement of those goals. But it was also shown that the two qualities exist in the musical materials, which are also surprising and appealing. The qualities are most easily observed, however, in the extramusical references, and one must delve into the musical fabric to observe how those characteristics go beyond the extra-musical references. Perhaps Roberts did not go far enough in his investigation of Schafer's music.

There are many other qualities of Schafer's music that could also be examined at length, for example: his treatment of form, his use of motivic unity, his adoption of twelve-tone technique, and his use of rhythmic modulation. But the most obvious and outstanding characteristic of his music is most likely the

connection with the extramusical world, and this explains why many authors have noted that element. This study has revealed much about the composer R. Murray Schafer, about his approach to composition, about his output as a whole to date, and about the musical construction of individual works.

Perhaps the best general explanation for Schafer's use of extramusical references lies in his interest in many fields outside of music and in his strong desire to communicate those ideas. Perhaps the best explanation for the use of extramusical references in general was given by Arnold Schoenberg, when he stated that extramusical elements have played an important role at certain points in the history of music:

> It seemed at first impossible to find pertinent substitutes for these (procedures associated with the tonal idiom) through musical means. Unwittingly, and therefore rightly, I found help where music always finds it when it has reached a crucial point in its development. . . . At each renewal or increase of musical materials, it is assisted by feelings, insights, occurrences, impressions and the like, mainly in the form of poetry -- whether it be in the period of the first operas, of the lied, or of program music. 136

136 Arnold Schoenberg, "Analysis of the Four Orchestral Songs, Opus 22," Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 27.

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